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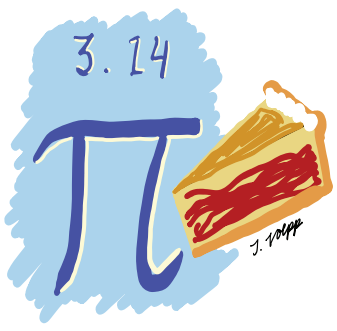

Happy Pi Day!

Class of 2024 dedicates senior gift to mental health funding

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

The Senior Committee Gift Team has dedicated the class of 2024 senior gift to mental health initiatives, continuing a long-standing annual tradition of gifts given from the graduating class to future Middlebury students. The graduating class has left a gift to the campus community upon graduation since 1981.

According to a March 8 email to seniors and senior Febs from the class gift team, the initiative is currently 20% of the way to meeting its goal of 200 donors from the classes of 2024 and 2024.5. This year's target increased slightly from the class of 2023's goal of 179 donors, which was 40% of the graduating class last year.

The Committee's FAQ page notes that the class gift will go toward the Mental Health and

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Town Meeting Day marked by historic victories, anger over school budgets

By EMILY HOGAN
Local Editor

COURTESY PHOTO / BERT JOHNSON

Last week, Vermonters gathered in their respective towns across the state to discuss and vote on current political issues.

Vermont's small-town character gives residents the unique opportunity to discuss key issues with their community through its annual tradition of Town Meeting Day. Vermonters gathered in their respective towns across the state to convene on topics like municipal and school budgets, as well as selectboard and presidential primary elections. The meetings took place on Monday, March 4 before people voted on ballot-specific items on Tuesday, March 5.

The tradition has its roots in the Congregationalist Church and dates back to 1762, according to Professor of Political Science Bert Johnson. Though the tradition occurs in other towns throughout New England, it is highly important to the character of local politics in Vermont.

"It's a real significant amount of power that is in the hands of just the assembled," said Johnson, who attends the town of Middlebury's Town Meeting Day each year.

Johnson noted that the gathering has a significant community feel to it, allowing for time in the agenda to express gratitude to retired town officers and recite a dedication to the town report. In Bethel, Vt., youth cheerleaders from the town's recreational club cheered on stage to engage the crowd in an event that included complimentary coffee and pie.

Town Meeting Day typically sees an average of approximately 20% turnout for each town throughout the state, according to a study done by Frank Bryan, a former professor of political science at the University of Vermont.

"It's not terribly low in the grand context of local government there," Johnson noted, adding that while ballot voting would likely see higher voter turnout than in-person town meetings, there is higher turnout in smaller towns where residents are likely to see their neighbors in the room.

During the voting phase of Middlebury's two-part Town Meeting Day this year, residents cast ballots for candidate Joe Biden in the Democratic primary, and Nikki Haley in the Republican primary, with an overwhelming 426 votes for Haley against 193 for former president Donald Trump, according to reporting from the Addison Independent. Vermont was Haley's only Super Tuesday win, and second win of the primaries after winning Washington D.C. She dropped out of the race on Wednesday, March 6.

With regard to spending bills, Middlebury voters approved the municipal spending plan of $13.6 million, which will require an almost 3% increase in the town's current property tax rate. Residents also voted in favor of a $1.5 million bond to upgrade stormwater infrastructure on South Street. This decision follows high levels of damage witnessed in last summer's flooding. Voters approved a $1.2 million bond to complete the reconstruction of Bakery Lane in downtown Middlebury from flooding damage, according to The Addison Independent.

Another issue of note for this year's elections was school budgets. Across the state, voters rejected around one-third of the proposed school budgets — an unusually large portion. In Addison County, although the town of Middlebury approved a school budget of

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Students and faculty reflect on college's educational approaches to Israel-Gaza war

By ELLIE TRINKLE and LIV SANCHEZ
News Editor and Staff Writer

A Fox News story published on Feb. 16 discussed an accusation made by StandWithUs Center for Legal Justice that Middlebury is failing to protect Jewish students who face antisemitism on campus. The reporting prompted community responses and the college's release of a web page titled "Middlebury's Educational Approaches to the War in Israel and Gaza," which outlines the college's community standards and resources available to those affected by the war.

Dean of Students Derek Doucet shared that he believes the resources available on the web page increase awareness of Middlebury's community standards and encourage difficult conversations about the war. Doucet also described how he and the college have sought to support students especially affected by the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza.

"In addition to [the webpage], we conduct personal outreach to students who we believe may be particularly impacted by the war, support student-initiated programming, and provide health and wellness resources to students who need additional support," Doucet wrote in an email to The Campus.

Khuram Hussain, vice president for equity and inclusion, described the webpage as a living document, meant to evolve and expand to best support student needs.

"The ongoing conflict raises fears of how political debates can serve as cover for reinforcing harmful stereotypes and our ongoing efforts should be responsive to the emerging needs of our community," Hussain wrote in an email to The Campus.

Jenna Abraham '26.5, a member of Middlebury Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), said that many of the efforts of the college feel more like responsive moves by the administration in the wake of criticism from the Fox News article rather than genuine efforts to create a positive environment.

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Second annual Student Ski Day offers new events at the Snow Bowl

By DAPHNE WANG
Contributing Writer

DAPHNE WANG / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The Snow Bowl hosted the rail jam for the first time this year.

Despite the warming weather, ski season in Vermont is not over just yet. On Friday, March 8, the Middlebury Snow Bowl hosted its second annual Middlebury College Student Ski Day. With special deals for students including free lift tickets and discounted rentals, along with a new "rail jam" event, the Student Ski Day invigorated the beginning of a new Middlebury tradition.

At the bottom lodge, families and students sat around the center stage while the student band "Curran Amster and Friends" led by Curran Amster '26 played live music. Later in the evening, DJ Serena Kim, co-owner of the Swift House Inn, played a set of top 100 music.

Derrick Cram, manager of Ralph Myhre Golf Course and the Snow Bowl ski shop, organized the event, parts of which were also set up in collaboration with the Middlebury Mountain Club and Middlebury Free Heelers, the college's telemark skiing club.

Cram has organized several events hosted by the Snow Bowl, here and expose to them this Vermont lifestyle."

An accessible introduction to ski mountain culture was a shared goal among the event organizers. In collaboration with the Middlebury Mountain Club, Will McDonald '25.5, president of Middlebury Free Heelers, pioneered the college's first ever "rail jam."

Rail jams are skiing competitions in which freestyle skiers perform tricks off of features such as rails, boxes and kickers. Inspired by the University of Vermont's two annual rail jams — Holiday of the Middlebury Mountain Club, was another advocate for the rail jam. To bring the event to fruition, Heller worked on the planning process with the Student Activities Office.

"The initial idea for the event was that it was going to be on Chapel Hill, and we were going to set up the jumps and rails there. People were going to be right there, and everybody could come," Heller said. "But then obviously, with the weather, that wasn't possible."

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Guest lecture tells story of Rwandan genocide, recieves student pushback

By MARS ROMERO
Contributing Writer

Students and faculty gathered in McCardell Bicentennial Hall this past week to listen to a lecture, "30 Years of Reconciliation in Rwanda: Alice's story" by Colgate University Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies Susan Thomson. Narrated through the life experiences of a single individual referred to anonymously as Alice, Thomson discussed the nation's rebuilding following the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Throughout the talk, Thomson aimed to address the question of who reconciliation processes have served since the genocide. After the talk, student feedback centered on criticism of the narrative as a single story, which some felt left out critical historical context.

The event was organized by Academic Coordinator Heidi Sullivan and John Spencer Professor of African Studies Jacob Tropp, and co-sponsored by the Rohatyn Center for Global Studies and the History, Political Science, African Studies and Anthropology departments.

Tropp described the collaborative process of coming up with the idea for holding the lecture.

"Back in the fall, a number of us faculty who research and teach about Africa got together and discussed ideas for organizing a public event this spring on an African topic that would be of wide community interest," Tropp wrote in an email to The Campus. "We eventually decided that it would be great to connect with the fact that this spring is the 30th anniversary of a major event in African and global history — the Rwandan genocide."

Prior to becoming a professor, Thomson was trained as a human rights lawyer and political scientist. She later served as a Human Rights Program Officer in the justice sector for the United Nations Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda, spending time in the region studying how individuals live through and rebuild after violence.

The talk focused on the single story of Alice, the daughter to a Hutu dad and Tutsi mom from a wealthy, land-owning lineage. Alice was 10 years old when the genocide began, and due to her family's status, was able to flee.

The Hutu and Tutsi are the two major ethnic groups in Rwanda. During the genocide in the spring of 1994, extremist elements of the majority Hutu population planned to kill the minority Tutsi population and anyone who opposed their planned violence.

Thomson began the lecture by recognizing that she was sharing important history through a single story, but defended it as an ethical choice. This decision later came into question, as students in the audience with connections to Rwanda had different experiences than those of Alice.

In an interview with The Campus, a student with connections to Rwanda explained their belief that Thomson took advantage of Middlebury students' disconnection to and lack of knowledge about Rwanda in just telling the story of Alice and her family.

"She's an academic, she's invited to a school with people who, Rwanda is so small, nobody knows about Rwanda. All they know, if they know anything, is the genocide, and the hollywood movie with the hero," the student told The Campus.

The choice to narrate reconciliation through one family's story left out contextual details that may have broadened student perspectives about a nuanced but horrific tragedy, the student added.

Thomson began by framing her talk around the question, "For whom has reconciliation worked since the 1994 genocide?" She explained that it has not worked for people like Alice and her family, which she stated she would prove over the course of the lecture.

Walking the audience through a history of the Rwandan Civil War, genocide and the different historical periods that led the country to where it is today, Thomson addressed failing peace accords, a power vacuum and a systematic approach to genocide that left upwards of 500,000 dead across a 100-day period.

Thomson told the story of a Tutsi man who asked his Hutu neighbor to kill him to avoid being separated from his land. According to Thomson, the man claimed he wanted to die on his property

"You hear of civilians actually being brought into the violence, in these kill or be killed situations," she told the audience.

Returning to the story of Alice and her family upon which Thomson framed the lecture, she described how Alice's family fled to the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, where they lived in refugee camps until they were forcibly returned to Rwanda in 1997.

Upon returning home, Alice's Hutu father was accused of genocide ideology — the belief that someone has contributed to a genocide — a crime Alice was later accused of in 2014. Alice then moved to Cape Town, South Africa, to avoid the charges leveled against her.

According to Thomson, the Rwandan government became increasingly authoritarian following the genocide, and dissenting political speech was outlawed.

"There was a belief by this time that anyone who was Hutu had obviously committed acts of genocide, and it goes along with this imposed narrative in the ways that individuals became beholden to the narrative, in part because of Rwandan political culture," Thomson explained.

Thomson spent a large portion of the lecture focused on the failings of the Rwandan government, discussing their limited infrastructure and a consolidation of authoritarian control that attempted to create "model citizens." While criticizing the government's handling of the topic of ethnicity as erasure, Thomson described the narratives established by the government like laws restricting how genocide and relevant ethnicities are talked about.

Some student audience members pushed back on Thomson's presentation of the story, mentioning other factors that contributed to the genocide. The students expressed that Thomson neglected to emphasize the role Belgian colonialism played in forming the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic categories, and the work done by individual Rwandans to rebuild their society.

"You have to understand that Rwandans have actually really done a lot of work to get where they are," one student shared.

Students also criticized the use of a single narrative perspective, as some audience members said she did not fully acknowledge how choosing the story of a wealthy subject from a small, elite social class would not best represent how reconciliation efforts in Rwanda have affected the everyday citizen. .

Editors' note: News Editor Ellie Trinkle '26 contributed reporting.

The Middlebury Campus

Are you a staff member at Middlebury? Do you have a story to share?

The Middlebury Campus is looking to hear from college employees about their experiences working here.

Submit an anonymous tip at go/campustip/ or this QR code:

Want to submit an op-ed about your opinions on the college? Email campus@middlebury.edu to learn how.

CLASS OF 2024 DEDICATES SENIOR GIFT TO MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING

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Wellness Programs Endowment, a fund established earlier this academic year using a $4.9 million unrestricted gift from a member of the class of 1959.

Co-chairs of the gift committee this year are Catie Baxter '24 and Gianna Palli '24. The committee originally consisted of eight volunteers from the senior class, currently down to five students, who work with a staff liaison and Assistant Director of Annual Giving Amina Ratavia '23. Ratavia and Dave Wilder, director of programming and events at the Student Activities Office, organized the committee.

"It's been rewarding and a lot of fun working with the seniors on this project," Ratavia wrote in an email to The Campus. She described feeling gratified by introducing seniors to the culture of philanthropy at Middlebury.

As a recent Middlebury graduate working in the Advancement Office, she has been exposed to facets of the college and its alumni programs she was not aware of as a student.

Naja Irvin-Conyers '24, a member of the gift committee, expressed her enjoyment for working with Ratavia and the rest of the committee on the project.

"It has been nice to connect with all the different parts of my class year. We have all been in leadership positions before and all want to leave Middlebury better than when we came," Irivin-Conyers wrote in an email to The Campus.

The class gift was voted on by the committee following a group discussion. The committee aimed to select a gift that would have a genuine impact on the Middlebury community.

"The Senior Class Gift is an opportunity for our class to leave a final farewell gift to the College: a way for us to leave a legacy and an impact on our alma mater," the senior committee wrote in a Feb. 27 email to the class of 2024 and 2024.5.

"We talked about all the things that made our Middlebury experience, the good and the bad, and we talked about where we

would want to see change. We wanted to ensure we left something valuable behind for the Middlebury College students and mental health just resonated with all of us," Irvin-Conyers wrote.

Ratavia encouraged the senior class to meditate on their values and their Middlebury experience as they considered options for the gift. The committee expressed in their FAQ document that a gift supporting mental health services on campus is important to meet the ever-changing needs of the student body.

"[It's] a very sweet and appropriate gift given the events that have occurred on campus during our time at Middlebury," Ella Du '24 said.

There have been multiple student deaths in the past four years, including the deaths of Evelyn Sorensen '25, Ivan Valerio '26 and Arianna Kamal '27 this year.

"I'm so inspired that the committee chose to donate to mental health and wellness. I think this is an important endeavor for the senior class—both financially and symbolically—and is a testament to the Class of 2024's compassion and kindness," Ratavia wrote.

The initiative is in a high-impact area for students of all grades, but some students expressed that the relative scale of the Class of 2024's contribution to the fund is small given the millions of dollars already going to mental health resources on campus.

"I think it's great but kind of moot," said Julia Levin '24 of the gift.

Senior Gift donor goals are based on the number of individual contributors rather than the size of contributions, meant to encourage the act of giving rather emphasizing a monetary amount. According to the FAQ document, funds raised from the gift will support additional licensed counselor positions, along with facilitating retreats and other identity-based mental health work.

Seniors have the opportunity to make a donation of any size at go/seniorgift24. Students who donate $20.24 will receive a pint glass with the Middlebury College logo.

Second annual Student Ski Day offers new events at the Snow Bowl

DAPHNE WANG / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

The team is already excited about next year's Ski Day.

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The rail jam was forced to change locations when there simply was not enough snow covering the ground on campus. With temperatures reaching over 50 degrees in late February, predictions from Groundhogs Day seemed to be coming true and an early spring was well underway.

Still, organizers were able to set up the rail jam at the Snow Bowl, which had more snow on the ground due to its higher elevation, and the event quickly became the main attraction of Student Ski Day, with other students and local families crowding around to watch.

"I think that skiing is a great way to get out and be active and meet other people. I met a ton of people doing the rail jam," McDonald said. "Getting all those people in the same place having fun doing the same thing is a great way to build that community."

Heller echoed a similar sentiment. She organized a table of snacks on the ski run next to the rail jam, where people congregated to both watch and participate in the event.

Plans are already underway for making future Ski Days a reality. Both Heller and McDonald hope to see the rail jam become a larger event involving more of the student body. Heller said she is already getting hype for next year, and has discussed having the Free Heelers bring some of their teleskis for people to try out, or sleds so anybody can participate.

The Snow Bowl is also looking into forming partnerships with other organizations and brands to provide students with additional reasons to attend Ski Day programming.

Cram is also working to create a more lively community at the Snow Bowl. His ideas include having weekly events, more live music, karaoke night and a piano bar. The Snow Bowl also launched night skiing this winter, which has drawn an enthusiastic crowd to the mountain a couple evenings a week.

Cram invites students to get involved in organizing Student Ski Day for next year. The rail jam is just one instance he cited of student initiative having a big impact on the college community.

"It's just fun. It's college, it's about its experiences, hanging out with friends, making relationships that are going to last you the rest of your life. And I think that this is one of those places where that can be done," Cram said.

Students and faculty reflect on college's educational approaches to Israel-Gaza war

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"As a Palestinian, I don't feel any of that administration reach-out, or this kind of environment that they are trying and saying that they're creating... I don't see it, I don't feel it," Abraham said.

Since Oct. 7, there have been various events organized within and for the Middlebury community relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict, including a vigil, interfaith panels and a teach-in. Hussain and fellow faculty members have worked alongside the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion to organize additional programs, dialogues and dedicated physical spaces for the community.

Hussain reflected on how moving it has been to engage with students and hear about their experiences through these events.

"What has stuck with me the most is the sensitivity, nuance, and perspective of so many of our students who talk about the conflict. With generosity, many of our students name their needs while being mindful and curious about the needs of other students who are experiencing the conflict differently than they are," Hussain wrote.

The Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation also hosts periodic "Dinner and Dialogue" events — gatherings open to students to process the effects of more than 75 years of conflict. The program, which started in spring 2023, increased in student attendance after Oct. 7, but the meals are open to the broader Middlebury college community.

Abraham was part of the initial startup of the dinner and dialogues.

"Sitting in a room with a bunch of Jewish and Arab students or, you know, people — there were professors from Iran, Israel, Palestine — it was just incredible," Abraham said. "The majority of us left that meeting crying over how impactful it was to humanize the other. It was such a great opportunity. I've been jumping on an opportunity to go to any of those dinners ever since.

Still, she emphasized that it was students and specific faculty and staff collectives, rather than the work of the college, that has made it so special.

"When it comes to constructive and caring dialogue, already that's the kind of student that Middlebury attracts. It's not impressive that they have these certain things created and supported by student involvement. It works because of the character of the student body. It's purely people's willingness to learn and listen," Abraham said.

Hussain agreed with the need to address varying perspectives.

"Throughout all of our community's efforts to educate, understand and thoughtfully engage about the the war in Israel and Gaza, it is important to recognize that we all come into these conversations with different histories, understandings, and connections to the region and its people — and our lived experiences influence how we feel about, participate in, or experience those conversations," Hussain wrote.

Associate Professor of Political Science Sebnem Gumuscu has also been involved in organizing dialogues and has provided extra office hours for students following the attacks on Oct. 7. Gumuscu taught "Contemporary Conflicts in the Middle East" over J-Term to teach students about the different approaches to the war and other conflicts. She believes conflict transformation is an essential tool when approaching this issue because it allows interested people to examine issues critically, and better evaluate how to move forward.

Historical, cultural and personal narratives, often excluded from popular discourse, are vital to the formation of a comprehensive understanding of the conflict, according to Gumuscu.

"I think it is important for our students to know about this framework and the skills and dispositions necessary to experience that transformation," she wrote in an email to The Campus. "That is how I believe, they can discover their agency, reclaim their power, and build a different world."

Gumuscu stressed the importance of engaging in productive conversations, both in and outside of the classroom. During her classes, she creates spaces for students to listen to each other, and to debate and conceptualize global conflicts. Through this, Gumuscu teaches her students to approach difficult issues with empathy and compassion.

Abraham is taking a course with Israel Institute Teaching Fellow Adi Livny this semester titled "Zionism and 'Roads not Taken.'"

"It's great to have these classes. But people that don't care — that aren't connected — aren't going to go and take them unless it's a distribution requirement, unless like, some kids are genuinely curious," Abraham said. "That's the kind of approach that falls on individual students, and Middlebury's willingness to be a part of it is just taking credit for the students' hard work."

SJP Co-President Islam Abushareah '26.5 spoke of the college's efforts to handle the broader Israel-Palestine conflict on our campus, and the need for open communication with experts in the field.

"I do think that the administration does want to do what's best, I think that they are not going about it the right way because they're not having direct communication with people with experts, who have been studying this stuff for a very long time. And we have those experts right here at our school. And I think they really need to communicate with those people," Abushareah told The Campus.

Abraham agreed, given the personal nature of the conflict.

"We can have all these conversations structured by administrators and have all of these resources, but the end of the day, there's not going to be that kind of change we're all looking for if people feel like they're guided through that discussion, if there's any other reason other than they want to be there because they want to be there."

Both Abraham and Abushareah credited the students for their hard work.

"I think that's one of the great things that Middlebury provides. Because we have so many international students, and because we have so many people from all walks of life, there is an ability within Middlebury to bring up a student that is worldly and able to understand these walks of life," Abushareah said. "At least from the perspective of like, this as a human being."

SUSTAINABLE KITCHEN BUYS JUICE AMOUR

By JULIA PEPPER
Senior Local Editor

Juice Amour, a local juice bar that sells smoothies, acai bowls, and other healthy raw and organic foods, was acquired on March 6 by Sustainable Kitchen, a vegan, vegetarian and gluten free food-delivery service based in Lincoln, Vt. Juice Amour's current storefront on Exchange Street in Middlebury will serve as Sustainable Kitchen's first in-person location, as the business currently only provides catering, participates in farmers' markets and sells items wholesale.

Kate Halladay and Richard Causey, a married couple with a daughter named Flora, will continue the tradition of a family-owned business in the space — Sheri Bedard founded Juice Amour with her father David Bedard in 2015.

"We are thrilled to embark on this journey with Juice Amour and the Middlebury community," Kate Halladay wrote in a March 7 press release. "We are dedicated to maintaining the high standards set by Sheri, David, and the team while bringing new and exciting offerings to our customers."

Sheri Bedard shared her thoughts on the acquisition in an interview with The Campus. After almost a decade of ownership, Bedard said realized it was time to take the business to the next level. While she is familiar with the marketing side of owning a business, she is less acquainted with food production.

"I own another business that's in marketing, and I teach a class at Champlain College, and I'm very busy. Juice Amour was always a passion project," Bedard said. "At the time we opened there was no other place to get raw juice and raw food... I wanted to have a place like that for our community."

Before the acquisition, Juice Amour carried several Sustainable Kitchen products in the store, which were well received, according to Bedard.

Her sister, Shawna Sherwin, is a manager at Juice Amour and helped make the connection between the two businesses. Sustainable Kitchen was searching for an in-person center for the business, and taking over Juice Amour was a clear next step in their growth.

Bedard expressed her excitement for the acquisition by Sustainable Kitchen – "I know that they are committed to the same things that we are."

She hopes the new owners are able to bring Juice Amour's supporters even more of what they want given they have more of a specialty in food.

Halladay and Causey intend to preserve the current menu and expand to offer breakfast and lunch options, according to the press release. Juice Amour's hours will extend accordingly, and under new ownership it will offer pump coffee from its neighbor, Little Seed Coffee Roasters. The new owners also plan to create a small store in the front, full of foods and snacks from other local vendors with whom they partner.

Bedard values healthy eating and clean food, she said, and has always tried to sell tasty fruits and vegetables at accessible price points at Juice Amour.

"The hardest part is the cost," Bedard said. "It feels like there are lots of subsidies for meat and vegetables, and very little for fruits and vegetables."

Bedard said she hopes that by having on-site cooks, Sustainable Kitchen will be able to buy in bulk and prepare bigger batches of food, reducing prices and making the food more accessible to the community, something for which she has always aimed.

Eloise McFarlane '24.5 has worked at Juice Amour on and off for three years making juices, smoothies and other food. She said the best part of working at Juice Amour is her coworkers.

"They have allowed me to engage the community in a meaningful and fun way," McFarlane wrote in a message to The Campus. She also enjoys making her own special concoctions with coworkers, like her version of a crunchwrap, which includes cheese, avocado, mushrooms, sauteed vegetables, homemade tortilla chips and Juice Amour's secret sauce.

She has also loved the connections that Juice Amour has had with the greater college and local community.

"Lots of athletes come in pre- or post-workouts it seems. Kids also do work there often. One group of students even filmed part of a short film in our space," McFarlane wrote.

McFarlane had been told about the acquisition, but didn't expect it to significantly change her work experience. "It's mostly adding more of a food element on top of the typical juices and smoothies," she said.

COURTESY PHOTO/SHERI BEDARD
Juice Amour and Sustainable Kitchen are both family-owned businesses. Seen here, from left to right: Sheri Bedard, Shawna Sherwin (Sheri's sister and manager), Rick

Juice Amour will have an official launch party under its new ownership in early April. Both the former and new owners feel optimistic about the acquisition of Juice Amour.

"After this, we will be their best customers. But we will no longer be owners," Bedard said. "They're planning on keeping everything that makes it Juice Amour, and adding to it."

TOWN MEETING DAY MARKED BY HISTORIC VICTORIES, ANGER OVER SCHOOL BUDGETS

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$50 million, other towns such as Brandon, Goshen, Whiting and Leicester saw their proposed school budgets be defeated, according to the Addison Independent.

The issue of school budgets has been rising in controversy over the past few months.

"The increase in overall education spending statewide looks to be like 19%, which means that a lot of school budgets have gone up, which means that people's property taxes get impacted," Johnson explained.

In the state of Vermont, school districts are funded by local property taxes. This February, the state government passed an emergency update to Act 127 that allows towns to cap a local property tax increase at 5% if school districts were facing budgetary pressures that led to increased spending.

"Act 127 created a set of incentives that the state legislature did not anticipate, and that has created uncertainty and last-minute changes for school boards and voters," wrote Professor of Political Science Sarah Stroup in an email to The Campus.

As a result of the update to Act 127, school districts proposed much higher budgets, prompting the state government to change the law a month and a half before Town Meeting Day. With this time constraint, school districts scrambled to adjust but largely kept their proposed high budgets, forcing voters to reckon with the resulting higher property taxes.

Burlington's City Election saw the highest voter turnout in a decade, as voters elected the first woman and openly LGBTQ+ mayor of the city, Emma Mulvaney-Stanak. The Progressive former city councilor and state representative beat out city councilor and Democrat Joan Shannon for the position.

Mulvaney-Stanak's win comes at a time when public safety is a key issue in the city of Burlington. Following the Black Lives Matter demonstrations in summer 2020, the Burlington City Council approved a reduction in the general fund police budget for the 2021 fiscal year. The move cut the department's police force by 30%, according to reporting from the Burlington Free Press. Burlington has seen a rise in high-profile crime issues, opioid addiction and an increase in unhoused people setting up tents throughout the city following the 2021 vote.

"There is an allegation that those two things are linked now," said Johnson, adding that it is also possible there is no correlation between the reduced budget and public safety issues.

While Shannon primarily supported police funding and expansion in her campaign, Mulvaney-Stanak touted a combination of increased social services and strategic police staffing and funding as the solution to public safety concerns.

"I think sometimes the Progressive box people want to put me in is that I want to continue to change staffing patterns of police and that that will make the city more unsafe, and it's just patently false because I do strongly think that police have a strategic and important role," Mulvaney-Stanak told VTDigger last fall.

Mulvaney-Stanak was wise to not ignore this issue, Johnson said, as he also noted that public safety is an issue that transcends county and state borders. Cities are seeing increased crime and a larger unhoused population, as has also been occurring in Middlebury.

"I guess it seems to have resonated with voters," Johnson said, in reference to Mulvaney-Stanak's policies.

With the close of Town Meeting Day for 2024, some towns have proposed a switch to the standard Australian ballot form of voting that occurs throughout most other states in the country. Some towns switched to ballot voting during the Covid-19 pandemic, when no town meetings occurred, and have not changed back to in-person voting, according to Vermont Public.

Johnson remarked on the special value of Town Meeting Day to Vermonters and their civic engagement

"There is something that is lost, which is that in-person learning," he said."I know it doesn't exist in the same way elsewhere. So you know, we could survive as a community if it went away, but we'd be losing something."

COURTESY PHOTO/BERT JOHNSON
Last week, Vermonters gathered in their respective towns across the state to discuss and vote on current political issues. Attendees discussed town spending budgets, school district budgets and elected town officials.

Homeward Bound cares for Addison County animals, offers connection for student volunteers

By SUSANNA SCHATZ
Senior News Editor

Homeward Bound is Addison Country's only animal shelter, serving over 1,200 animals annually. The shelter's mission is "to be a community-centered shelter that supports the human-animal bond through compassionate care, adoption, education, and advocacy," according to its website. And volunteers, like the Middlebury students who spend a few hours there each week, are among the community members that make the organization's mission a reality.

Founded in 1976, Homeward Bound shelters dogs, cats, birds, rabbits and other small animals at its site on Boardman Street in the town of Middlebury, in addition to providing a variety of services for animals and their caretakers.

"Exposing the animals to people and different experiences is essential to helping them be their best selves as companion animals," Vicki Coyle, interim executive director of Homeward Bound, wrote in an email to The Campus.

Their program PetFIX offers affordable spay, neuter and vaccination services for the dogs, cats and rabbits of Addison County and Brandon, Vt. residents. The organization also has a program called PetCORE that focuses on serving under-resourced pet owners in the area.

Homeward Bound is just a seven-minute drive from the college's campus off of Route 7, making it an easily-accessible place for students to volunteer. Homeward Bound has a staff of thirteen, who work together with 125 volunteers to run the organization successfully, according to Coyle.

"We are a lean organization and have just enough staff to cover shifts," Coyle wrote in an email to The Campus. "When we had some illnesses this weekend, we did have to close to the public on Saturday. It's a tough line to navigate."

Nikky Sztachelski '25 has been volunteering at Homeward Bound for the past year because she believes in the importance of the organization's mission.

"Animal shelters like Homeward Bound are incredibly important in providing a safe space to support animals in need while finding them a forever home," Sztachelski wrote in a message to The Campus.

Sztachelski volunteers with the dogs at Homeward Bound, walking them and playing with them at the shelter's private dog park.

"I love getting to meet all of the new dogs that are brought into the shelter throughout the year, and I especially love to see the more timid ones open up after a little bit of time," she wrote. "Each dog has their own personality and I love getting to see what they are like when I meet them."

In 2021, Homeward Bound received funding and land for its own dog park. The park project was completed by former executive director Jessica Danyow.

Last spring, The Campus published an op-ed entitled "Why you should volunteer at Homeward bound." Bella Burke '23.5 wrote about how fulfilling volunteering and interacting with the animals at Homeward Bound was for her.

"By volunteering, you can help improve these animals' lives before they find their forever homes," Burke wrote.

Sztachelski shared that shelters like Homeward Bound that are known within the community and have robust volunteer programs help push back against the negative stereotypes some dog breeds have.

COURTESY PHOTO/NIKKY SZTACHELSKI
Sztachelski volunteered a few times per week at Homeward Bound while working on campus last summer and spent time with Gibby (pictured) before he was adopted in July.

"Some of the sweetest dogs that I have encountered at Homeward Bound have been Pitbull and Rottweiler mixes," she wrote. "I love getting to share pictures and stories with my friends and family to show them that the bad reps they get as a breed couldn't be further from the truth."

Homeward Bound also provides support for Addison County residents who lack sufficient resources to care for their pets. The organization provides services such as supplemental pet food and access to affordable spay and neuter surgeries at Homeward Bound through their PetCORE (Community Outreach Resources & Education) program. Established in 2019, this service provides essential pet services for owners who live in Addison County and have an income at or less than 200% of the federal poverty level.

In December 2023, the Addison Independent reported that PetCORE had over 100 clients with 200 animals altogether.

In 2019 Homeward Bound hired its own veterinarian to perform spay and neuter services. Community members can make spay and neuter appointments at the shelter at a low cost.

"We offer low cost spay/neuter programs to help end unplanned puppies/kittens, which also drain the resources of a shelter system," Coyle wrote.

While Coyle is currently serving as interim executive director of Homeward Bound following Danyow's departure at the end of last year, she plans to move toward hiring a new permanent executive director later this year.

"It's fabulous and stressful, and I've learned a lot since being here," Coyle wrote.

LIV, LOVE, LOCAL: THISTLE AND HONEY

Liv, Love, Local is a column highlighting local businesses of Vermont, especially cafés and restaurants in the Middlebury area. Through interviews with owners, I want to highlight the specific successes and challenges that come along with small business ownership in Vermont, the hard work owners and employees put into these businesses, and how these spots serve as places to build community and connection.

By OLIVIA MUELLER
News Editor

Nikki Bowdish has provided the town of Middlebury with cakes, cookies and other treats from her home-based bakery, Thistle and Honey, since the fall of 2019. While Bowdish currently takes orders for pickup and local delivery in addition to custom cake services for weddings, she aspires to eventually open a physical storefront in Middlebury.

Bowdish has long had a passion and talent for baking. "It's just the one thing that I've always known I was good at," she said.

She grew up baking for her family and has since worked as a professional at the former Fresh Market in Burlington, while taking on part-time gigs as a pastry chef as she worked other front-of-house roles at various establishments in the city.

When Bowdish moved to Middlebury in 2015, there were no bakeries hiring, so she found a full-time role as a server at Rosie's Restaurant. She eventually started Thistle and Honey as a side hustle to continue channeling her passion for baking.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Bowdish and some of her coworkers were laid off, so she decided to pursue Thistle and Honey full-time. Curating an array of treats for a craft fair at Mary Hogan Elementary School helped her formulate her original menu, which was compact, aiming to be simple and sustainable for one person to manage. Bowdish decided to start with cake, scones and brownies. She opted for one rotating monthly cake flavor at the outset to simplify ingredient costs as she began to scale up her business.

"I think the first cake I started with was the vanilla confetti one, because it's so nostalgic and everybody loves it," Bowdish said.

Bowdish prioritizes local ingredients whenever possible, often from producers in Middlebury or surrounding areas, such as butter from Cabot Creamery in Cabot, Vt., heavy cream and milk from Monument Farms Dairy in Weybridge, Vt., and local honey from Middlebury's Champlain Valley Apiaries.

She visits local orchards and farms for apples, cherries, blueberries and other fruit, preferring to hand-pick in the summer when possible. Thistle and Honey's maple cream comes from Werner Tree Farm in Middlebury.

"The maple syrup I use is actually made from my plumber," Bowdish explained, referring to Jon Fuller, who operates Fuller Family Sugaring in Underhill, Vt.

As the sole owner and operator of Thistle and Honey, a typical day for Bowdish involves not only baking goods to fulfill orders for daily pickup, but also managing her online sales, providing customer service and checking inventory. She juggles all the operations of her business while raising her three children.

"One of the biggest challenges is the part where it's me trying to be a present mom. And also trying to be present and fully invested in these desserts," she said. "I don't want people to be disappointed, even if it's 'just' a birthday cake."

The business grew organically after Bowdish began posting on Front Porch Forum and connecting with parents of Middlebury students seeking safe treat deliveries for students confined to campus during the pandemic.

During Covid-19, Bowdish learned about the delivery huts placed on campus at the Shannon Street and Hillcrest parking lots for contactless delivery from a friend in Dining Services and soon began a robust delivery of treat boxes and cakes to Middlebury students.

"It was really nice having the ability to be a part of a glimmer of sunshine in an otherwise deeply bleak landscape," Bowdish said.

Currently, deliveries and pickup orders for students at the college make up just over half of Bowdish's non-wedding dessert orders. She appreciates how customer relationships have evolved over the past four years.

"I've gone from making their birthday cakes as freshmen to their graduation cakes and it's just the coolest," she added.

Local relationships have been a highlight of growing Thistle and Honey. Bowdish has particularly appreciated the support of Beth Bluestein, owner of Sparrow Art Supply.

"[Bluestein] has been so lovely in getting my business name out there locally in ways that I could not because she has adorably coined me as her official treat dealer," Bowdish said.

Thistle and Honey has made the desserts for every gallery opening at Sparrow Art Supply and will also make the desserts for the business' grand reopening party on April 5 at 44 Main Street.

In 2021, Bowdish began working with Deniz Sehovic, an online business coach who encouraged her to diversify and start creating wedding cakes. Bowdish had a goal of booking five weddings for 2021 and ended the year having made cakes for 21. While she no longer works with Sehovic as a coach, Bowdish has slowly increased her annual wedding count, reaching 36 cakes in 2023.

Thistle and Honey receives most of its wedding dessert requests between July and November, meaning some months require delivering multiple cakes per weekend or even per day. After an initial inquiry call with a couple to plan, Bowdish organizes a tasting to settle on the flavors and finalizes the design about a month and a half before the wedding day. She asks for inspiration pictures and then puts her own spin on the design.

"My favorite part is when it gets to the point of finalizing visually what they want the cake to look like," she said. "And I love any chance to work with florists because I think flowers are just the best thing on earth."

Bowdish has a long-term dream to open up a physical storefront for the dessert shop. For the coming year, however, she is focusing on maintaining a sustainable wedding clientele and growing her local client base within Middlebury in support of a larger scale venture.

"I want a bakery where people can walk in, see my face — or someone else's maybe — and buy desserts that I have made," she said. "That's the dream right there."

COURTESY PHOTO/NIKKI BOWDISH
Bowdish currently takes orders for pickup and local delivery in addition to custom cake services for weddings and hopes to open a physical storefront in Middlebury in the future.

Total eclipse of Vermont: Why the college should excuse students on April 8

Op-Ed

Acadia Klepeis is a member of the class of 2024 and the Senior Arts and Culture Editor.

Sometimes, the planets and the stars do align.

On Monday, April 8, Vermont will be in the path of totality for a solar eclipse. For a small state like ours, this is a once-in-a-generation occurrence. According to Observatory Specialist Dr. Catherine Miller, Vermont has not been in this situation since 1932 — and the path of totality won't return to Vermont until 2079. Even outside of our state, The New York Times reports that "it will be about 21 years" — or around the lifetime thus far of a Middlebury College student — "before another total solar eclipse of this magnitude returns to the contiguous United States." We can't let this unique chance pass us by.

In order to maximize our collective experience of this rare event, the college should cancel afternoon classes on April 8.

Canceling class, although rare, is not unprecedented. For instance, the college routinely cancels a day of classes for its annual spring symposium, showing that it is willing to make exceptions to the academic schedule for educational benefits. But what about the benefits of wonder? Awe? A school that prides itself on its environmental emphasis ought to honor its geographic serendipity by allowing students to benefit from the eclipse.

This isn't coming from someone who is keen to miss class — in my four years at Middlebury, I can count on one hand the number of times I haven't made it to the classroom, and each time involved a significant health or personal crisis. I am aware, too, that some professors may resist the idea of canceling class on principle. Although rescheduling class is an excellent option for seminars, it is not a perfect solution for all class sizes.

With this in mind, I suggest that professors offer an additional excused absence, applicable only on April 8. This way, classes can be held without restriction, but students will not be penalized for wanting to experience this remarkable event. Miller agreed, writing, "I think that students should be excused from classes during the partial and total phases of the solar eclipse. For many, this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that should not be missed."

If the word "eclipse" has you humming Bonnie Tyler more than charting planets, here's the short version: Between 3:25 and 3:31 p.m. on an otherwise bright spring afternoon, the sky will suddenly grow dark. Looking up through special eclipse-viewing glasses, viewers will see the dark silhouette of the moon surrounded by a glaring circle of the sun. In all seriousness, don't pull a Trump — "Never look directly at the Sun," Miller urged. Luckily, the college will have glasses to provide to the campus community.

In an email to The Campus, Frank Winkler Professor of Astrophysics Eilat Glikman shed some light on the science behind the phenomenon.

"If the situation is: Sun – moon – Earth, then from the perspective of Earth, the moon blocks out the Sun, causing it to get dark during the day for up to 4 minutes. This is because when the moon blocks out the sun, it is casting a large shadow on a portion of the Earth. Solar eclipses only happen during the day when it is a new moon," Glikman wrote. "Since the shadow doesn't cover the entire Earth, only certain locations on Earth get to experience the eclipse. We in Vermont are in the 'path of totality,' which is the part of the earth that can see the total eclipse."

Given that Middlebury hugs the border of the zone of totality, students on campus will experience a shorter window of darkness than Vermonters farther north in places like Burlington or Montpelier.

"Locations within the path of totality will experience a total solar eclipse, whereas locations outside the path of totality will, at most, experience a partial solar eclipse, meaning only part of the Sun will get blocked," Miller explained.

True devotees will want to make the trek outside of Middlebury to intensify their experience. (Looking for a soundtrack to your eclipse commute? Try my personalized eclipse playlist).

That doesn't mean that the town of Middlebury can't figure into your eclipse plans, however.

Local businesses like The Vermont Bookshop already have special books out on display, and Vermont's Own Gifts & Goods' sidewalk sign has been advertising eclipse glasses for weeks now. Even the state's office website features a countdown. Vermont is particularly eager for the rush of eclipse chasers after last summer's extreme rainfall affected tourism. In this way, purchasing glasses from a local business or buying food at an eclipse festival is also economically motivated.

"I've been looking forward to this for like eight years," said Adayliah Ley '24, who glimpsed a partial eclipse in 2017. As early as 2022, she contacted President Laurie Patton about the possibility of rearranging spring break to include the event, but received a negative response from Associate Provost for Planning LeRoy Graham. Now, Ley hopes to convince her professor that the class should travel northward for the event.

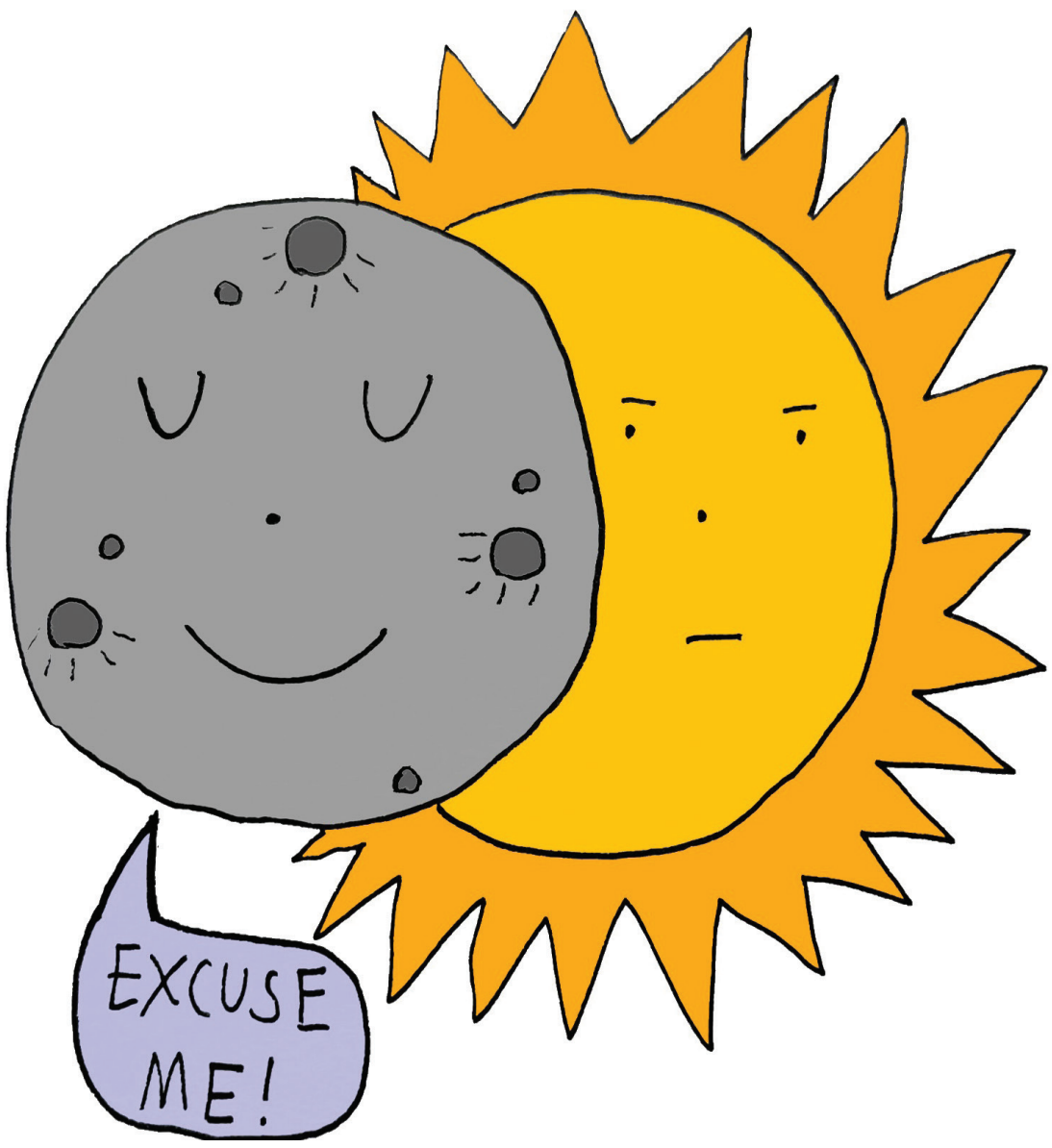
Middlebury students are encouraged to envision themselves in the world, meaning that they may travel far and wide upon graduation, moving towards or away from the sight of the next total eclipse.

"For some people, [this] might be a once-in-a-lifetime chance," Ley said.

Like Ley, most of this year's seniors graduated high school in 2020, meaning that they are well accustomed to missed opportunities. Let's not add another to their list.

You don't have to take my word for it. In an email to The Campus, Schumann Distinguished Scholar Bill McKibben wrote, "We, rightly, take the time to celebrate various religious occasions on campus; every once in a great while a great epochal moment from our pagan life appears, and I for one would not miss the chance to howl at this darkening of the sun. The great class of the universe meets daily, but we miss most of its lessons; only occasionally does it absolutely demand our attention."

How right he is. Don't let one class eclipse the eclipse.



Skiles Roberts-salvador

SARAH SAYS: SO, I TOOK A CLASS ON PORN

Op-Ed

Sarah Miller is a member of the class of 2024 and an Editor at Large.

On a semi-weekly basis, Sarah Miller shares her thoughts on culture and campus life.

When I tell people I took a class on porn — "Decolonizing Porn: Circulating Desire Between Europe and the Americas," to be more specific — the question that invariably follows is "Did you watch porn in class?" To that, I say, yes, sort of, but we watched most of the porn outside of class.

Most people are still quite prudish, or maybe worse, overly prurient at the prospect of a substantial discussion on porn. Why the hand wringing? If the early twentieth century lays claim to the Golden Age of Television, I'd venture the early twenty-first century will someday endure as the Golden Age of Porn. Considering the average age someone in our generation will first see porn now is now 12 and, in 2019, Pornhub reported 3.5 billion visits per month. Porn is now the primary medium forming our generation's ideas on sex.

Despite how much porn you, the individual, watch, sex is still mediated by porn, either by porn your sexual partner watches or by norms so cemented in our sexual fabric the fact of the source material is almost insignificant.

Oxford philosopher Amia Srinivasan's seminal essay collection, "Talking to My Students About Porn" details her surprise about the strength of her students' conviction in porn's discursive power, considering they are the first generation "truly raised on internet porn." But one doesn't need to be a philosopher to opine on porn's influence.

In my class, comprised mostly of women, we described the normalization of choking. Irrespective of the consent and pleasure enjoyed by both participants, this trend is a straight-line inheritance from porn's ethic of masculine dominance.

Women can and do choke men, but what the women in my class described was not an exchange but a proposition: "Do you mind if I choke you?" This was a proposition they accepted as a normal function of the new college sexual repertoire.

Consider also, that blowjobs shot to prominence with the release of "Deep Throat" in 1972, the first mainstream porn. The movie is premised on problematized notions of female sexuality: Despite her participation in sex parties, Linda Lovelace, the film's star, cannot have an orgasm. When she visits a doctor he surprises her with the news that her clitoris is located in her throat, therefore she can only orgasm from blow jobs. This fantasy did not spring from a vacuum. Men were reacting to the anxieties from "The Myth of The Vaginal Orgasm," a book which suggested women did not need men to orgasm.

Consider also the bruises on Linda Lovelace's thighs, and her admission years later, "Virtually every time someone watches that movie, they're watching me being raped."

Consider also when bodily hairlessness in women became an expectation.

I could go on.

I'm not concerned with demonizing the particulars of anyone's sexual practices. I only want to suggest that sexual representations in mainstream porn have real influence on our lives, beyond sex.

Regular porn use among men is associated with increased support for violence against women. This relationship was stronger for sexually violent porn but was also found to be significant in those who watched non-violent porn. Numerous studies have demonstrated a link between male porn consumption and attitudes toward affirmative action for women and rape victims. In 1974, radical feminist Robin Morgan wrote, "Porn is the theory and rape is the practice." She was derided for overestimating porn's reach, but her words were just several decades too prescient.

Our final project in the course required us to produce a creative research project that utilized secondary sources and primary sources (porn) in service of our thesis. For reasons of self-interest, I decided to compare white women and Latin women's representations in porn by surveying the most popular PornHub videos in each category. My results were unsurprising: in my admittedly non-scientific sample size, Latin women were more likely to be recipients of anal sex, more likely to get their hair pulled and heads pushed, more likely to give deep head and more likely to get choked.

The Latin body in porn is hyper-visible; unlike the demure white women, often schoolgirls or stepsisters, they are the sexual instigators berated by men for liking violent sex so much. This is, of course, but one example of the many racial stereotypes mainstream porn helps codify and reproduce. In their projects, the women in my class focused on representations of the Black and Asian body with great intelligence.

The moral implications of porn were one of my class' favorite topics of discussion. Nearly unanimously, we believed porn was a net social evil. We did not need much convincing; students that elect to take "Decolonizing Porn" likely arrive with pre-existing biases. I can anticipate the arguments. What about feminist porn? Queer porn? On principle, I don't object to people paying to watch or getting paid to have sex, but the principle is irrelevant. The overwhelming majority of porn that is produced and watched is backed by corporations like Pornhub.

Yet, the argument against porn is fraught with futility. Despite the recent laws passed blocking Pornhub's normal operations in several states, I remain skeptical that any legislative body can curb its power. Mainstream porn is now part of the program. The more pressing question is how we navigate it.

As the most technologically literate generation yet, it falls to us to figure out how to demystify porn and talk about as frankly as any other aspect of sexual health and intimacy.

One of this past decades' greatest literary sensations, Sally Rooney's "Normal People" demonstrates the power in fearless depictions of sex. During one of Marianne and Connell's early hookups, "She asked him if it felt good and he pretended he didn't hear her. She was on her hands and knees so he couldn't see her facial expression or read into it what she was thinking. After a few seconds she said in a much smaller voice: Am I doing something wrong? He closed his eyes. No, he said. I like it."

This passage nails the alienation of intimacy under porn. Connell embodies masculine ambivalence, in control but somehow both turned on and tortured by the control, while Marianne, submissive in action and bearing, asks for a reassurance he withholds. Between them yawns all that is left unexplained and unsaid.

As a first year, I submitted a series of naked and mostly naked pictures of me in my childhood bedroom for my first year seminar's final project. At the time, I considered the project to be fundamentally interested in body image ("cellulite" on the back of my thighs), but my time in "Decolonizing Porn" prompted me to reevaluate the project.

I felt more confident, more free and more silly (my friend and I laughed a lot) naked in front of my friend's camera than most of the time I walk through my city or this campus, tense with the knowledge of observation.

It was the rare moment my body was not as an object of consumption, not posing for someone else's eye, but just for a minute that it might belong to me. Like those pictures, my greatest moments of sexual intimacy come when I am able to entangle myself from the performance and embrace vulnerability and all its beautiful awkwardness.

Elections, both big and small: How Middlebury students can make a difference

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.

Ninety-eight percent of Middlebury students were registered to vote for the November 2020 presidential election. That number doesn't surprise us. Comparable liberal arts schools, including Bowdoin College, St. Olaf College and Bates College are also high on the Washington Monthly list. Perhaps Middlebury naturally tends to attract politically active and engaged students — or the work of civic engagement-focused groups such as MiddVotes and Civics in Action has been successful in increasing student voter registration.

But we should not get too excited. The stakes of the 2020 presidential election felt particularly high to many, shown in part by the race producing the highest percentage of voter turnout of the twenty-first century. We encourage students not to lose momentum, even if future elections feel less like an exciting opportunity to enact change. Beyond national elections, we also urge students to pay attention to local politics — a good place to start would be right here on campus, with the Student Government Association (SGA).

Civic engagement at all levels of government, from SGA and Community Council elections on campus to the presidential election, matters. We empower students to remember the value their political engagement can have in many forms, particularly on the smaller scale of on campus governance or Vermont state politics, where the number of voters involved is fewer.

We have seen a number of moments of political engagement at Middlebury in the recent past. Students mobilized against Charles Murray's visit to campus in 2017, protested against Middlebury's investment in Chase Bank and campaigned for a well-respected professor to be given a tenure track position. These examples show that Middlebury students can and do become passionately involved in meaningful issues on campus. We urge students to continue to be aware of issues happening at the college and agitate to hold the administration accountable when possible.

Many have cited Middlebury's rural location as a restriction to their political engagement. It is true — the nearest city of Burlington, which only has around 44,000 people itself, is an hour away. Middlebury, therefore, can feel like a bubble, isolated from large protests and political action. At the same time, we are lucky to be in a state with such a unique and vibrant political culture. Vermont is one of only 10 states where the Democratic and Republican parties share power in government, and the state government has been known to successfully get things done across the aisle. We wrote this week on Vermont's annual Town Meeting Day, which is often held up as the pillar of local democracy in its truest form. Throughout the rest of the year, residents are known for their displays of passion at local town meetings, most notably in the turbulent school district consolidation debates of the past several years.

Just like for our state and federal governments, SGA requires voter engagement to run smoothly. After all, the SGA is working on projects such as reducing the academic credit requirement, supporting mental health, and voicing the student body's preferences to the administration, faculty, and board of trustees. However, student engagement with SGA is concerningly low. For the past few years, SGA elections have never garnered over 50% of the vote, and last year, only around a quarter of students voted in mostly uncontested races. Student engagement in SGA elections will make the elected SGA members more representative of students' interests and increase the respect the organization receives across the college.

To our SGA elected representatives, we are grateful that you took the initiative to run for your positions and spend time engaging on issues that the student body cares about. However, we encourage more students to contest SGA elections and run engaged campaigns — our student body deserves the opportunity to make a real choice in who it selects to represent us. We also ask that you carefully weigh the responsibilities of your position and find new avenues to exert influence over Middlebury's discourse. The SGA must serve as a strong voice for the thousands of students here, even when it is uncomfortable or challenging.

In the four years that students spend at Middlebury, we will make new friends (some of them for life), take classes that challenge our ways of thinking, fall in and out of love, eat countless meals in Ross, learn to ski or skateboard, and likely cast our first ballots. Our actions here are not just limited to the daily routines we develop in our own lives, however. Students have the ability to push the boundaries of their communities through consequential civic action — whether that occurs at Town Meeting Day, an absentee ballot or the next SGA election.

It sounds idealistic, we know, and perhaps even naive to some. But isn't that what college is for? Now is the time in our lives to take bold swings and brave stands, to show up and assert that our generation's voice will be heard, and to be passionate about every opportunity to affect change in our community.

A CASE FOR REVIVING MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE REPUBLICANS

Op-Ed

***Joseph Jacobson** is a member of the class of 2027.*

Middlebury College has a strong reputation as a premier academic institution, and I am sure few would disagree that it is in everyone's best interest for the college to provide a true liberal arts education. However, over the last several years, I have observed that part of the student body has become opposed to free speech, a trend made significantly dire by what I view as relative complacency by the administration. My concern for liberal arts values including tolerance and open-mindedness has prompted me to revive the Middlebury College Republicans (MCR) club in order to bring more diverse views to campus and to better reflect the values of Middlebury. The main idea is to encourage respectful discourse and stimulate meaningful discussion that will enrich everyone's college experience.

Middlebury College Republicans is an organization for politically interested students to discuss current issues, politics, philosophy and more similar topics. While we will focus our activity through a conservative lens, anyone is welcome to join the club, regardless of their political beliefs or prior knowledge. We are aware of the many ideologies within conservatism and the Republican Party, and reiterate that people who hold diverse beliefs are encouraged to join the club. The club will seek to hold discussions, debates, mock elections, and events, and we will focus on advocating for conservative issues on campus and in Vermont.

Our chapter of the College Republicans has a storied history in Vermont politics; in fact, Middlebury's Executive in Residence and former Governor Jim Douglas, was a leader in the club when he was a student here. The three main objectives I have in reviving the College Republicans are: creating a tolerant space for anyone who desires a place to discuss politics in a respectful manner, providing an outlet for people to express their repressed conservative views without fear of social consequence and restoring the credibility of liberal arts education that has been eroded by the rejection of free speech.

Middlebury College ranks as the 16th-worst college for free speech in America according to the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression's (FIRE) 2024 rankings. It is most ironic that Middlebury, along with other prestigious liberal arts colleges, consistently rank extremely low in free speech every year. Why? I subscribe to the common belief that the foundational principles of a liberal arts education include tolerance, diversity and open-mindedness, and I am concerned that Middlebury is failing to uphold these values.

As we establish this club, I want to offer three related points. Firstly, it is not in anyone's interest for any student to be bullied, harassed, stereotyped, or ostracized due to their beliefs, something that explicitly violates Middlebury's Non-Discrimination Policy. A campus with such an attitude is an embarrassment to higher education, especially a school that prides itself on a culture of tolerance and diversity.

Second, it is disrespectful and often blatantly inaccurate to assume or stereotype another student based on what you think you know about them. For example, it is irrational to assume that membership in the College Republicans automatically prescribes someone with certain beliefs.

Thirdly, I am worried that at an elite liberal arts college like Middlebury the campus and intellectual atmosphere operate in a bubble, creating the illusion that the world is a monolith of progressive, left-wing thought. Unsurprisingly, people around the world possess extremely diverse views, and I believe that it is quite unfortunate that a school with many diverse and international students doesn't seem to value diverse and international political beliefs. Middlebury has made it clear that they value diversity in the school's demographics: students admitted for the Class of 2027 hailed from 45 states and 45 countries. Should not the political viewpoints on campus be reflective of this statistic? I urge students to recognize that future employers, neighbors and community members may practice different politics.

I opine here with respect, out of concern for the college which many of us love dearly. I intend to promote community and uphold academic virtue through my efforts in reviving the club. I believe there is a world of knowledge and experience we can learn from one another on this campus, and I enjoy discussing contemporary issues with those I disagree with. I am delighted to be able to say that I have many friends and classmates who hold differing beliefs that I have worked well with and have enjoyed conservation with. I want to preserve these sparks of a tolerant dynamic on campus for years to come.

Please feel free to email us at mcr@middlebury.edu with questions or if you would like to join the club. We meet biweekly on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in Axinn 103. You can also follow our Instagram @middmcr.

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"Small Island Big Song" promotes climate awareness through music

By NORAH KHAN
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO/ KIMMI CRANES

Small Island Big Song's live concert has toured to eighteen countries.

The musical group "Small Island Big Song" celebrated the beauty of Pacific and Indian Ocean islands and their perspectives on the climate through music in Wilson Hall on Friday, March 8. The night began with a unique introduction to each artist; the dark stage was illuminated by the screen behind, displaying the home islands of each member as they entered playing their respective instruments.

Each song highlighted a specific island from which one of the performers hailed, with that respective artist taking center stage, bright under the spotlight. There was a mixture of spoken word, singing, dance and instrumentals throughout the entire performance. The music was enchanting — it felt as if the audience was no longer in Vermont, but rather in the lush greenery of the tropics.

The instruments were captivating and unique, with some audience members taking to the aisle to jump and sway with the music. Children, students and community members joined together to enjoy and move with the bright performance.

Two Middlebury participants came up on stage to perform as well. Elio Farley '24.5 shared his original written word with the audience. Their impactful words about the power of love in contentious political times were backed by soft music.

Local Abenaki artist and Middlebury School of Abenaki Director Jesse Bowman Bruchac performed a song with the group, his guitar and voice contributing to the euphony filling the auditorium. During his piece, the audience seemed to sway along with the music, almost mimicking the tides of an ocean.

Sammy, a vivacious man with an infectious personality, took center stage in the Madagascar songs to represent his homeland. The screen displayed video footage from Madagascar, with children singing and dancing along with him. The screen featured the towering Baobab trees native to the region, which were declared an endangered species in 2018.

One of the most notable moments from the whole event was Mathieu Joseph's dance performance; he donned a headwear piece representing the long-beaked dodo and transported the audience to the leafy rainforests of Mauritius. After removing the headpiece, he leapt into the air, flying through flips and twists.

At the very end of the performance, the group explicitly called for action regarding climate change.

"We must protect our ocean, we must respect our ocean," said Taiwanese and Atayal artist Yuma Pawang. "If there is no ocean, there is no life."

Following this solemn but important message, the screen displayed footage of bleached coral — which occurs when corals become white in response to stressors such as changes in temperature, light or nutrients. Approximately 75% of global reefs have experienced bleaching as a result of global warming. The 10 most recent years have been the hottest on record, a trend that the performers said will continue unless nations significantly alter their economies and immediately transition away from fossil fuels. Pawang screamed at the end of this song, encapsulating the rage that so many feel over the climate crisis. Her voice was like a cold plunge into the water of the Pacific.

The climate-focused group is made of artists who have chosen to maintain the cultural voice of their people, to sing in the language and to play the instruments of their land. These unique stories mixed with diverse contemporary styles establish a contemporary musical dialogue between cultures from Madagascar, Aotearoa, Taiwan, Mauritius, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Tahiti and Rapa Nui.

The project was started by Taiwanese theater producer BaoBao Chen and Australian music producer and filmmaker Tim Cole following the fifth International Panel on Climate Change Report. Chen and Cole spent three years collaborating with artists in their homelands, recording songs across islands. They have achieved several accolades, including two award-winning albums, a feature film and a live concert that has toured to eighteen countries.

Middlebury also hosted a panel and a film screening in the week before the performance. The film, filmed over three years across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, united ancient musical lineages to create a heartfelt plea for environmental awareness and cultural preservation from those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Moderated by Chen, the panel featured performing artists and gave students and community members the opportunity to discuss the impacts of climate change and explore how the arts influence our relationship with the environment.

Small Island Big Song's performance at Middlebury was important and necessary to continue the dialogue surrounding the climate crisis. The islanders in Small Island Big Song experience first-hand the consequences of climate change. Their homes flood, their reefs lose color and their oceans acidify. In order to fully address the challenges of the climate crisis, they implore that we listen to the voices of those who experience it most directly.

MAKES YA FEEL: TIME TO GET CRAFTY

By ELLIE TRINKLE
News Editor

Gallery hoppers, Spotify stalkers, bookworms, Letterboxd users and anyone who enjoys art, this is the place for you. Makes Ya Feel highlights art across all of its mediums, small- and large-scale, that (you guessed it) makes ya feel! Check back every other week for recommendations, reviews and discussions.

When schoolwork gets overwhelming, it can be difficult to find ways to de-stress. Though it is important to remain on top of our responsibilities, it is equally as important to take care of ourselves. Art can be a great way to reconnect with your emotions and forget everything else that is occupying your mind. That's why I propose craft nights with friends as an accessible, fun and stress-free way to step away from schoolwork and relax.

Craft nights allow you to hang out with your friends and express your creative side no matter your prior experience with making art. I am not the greatest artist — despite always envying those who could draw intricate doodles in their class notebooks — but I have found so much joy in attending these events with my friends. I appreciate the much-needed break from all that's occupying my mind where I get a chance to be present and creative.

Craft nights can be thrown together very easily, making them the perfect downtime activity regardless of your budget. You can acquire free crafting materials on campus — just head over to McCullough to pick up Vermont brochures with some fun pictures or even use an old issue of The Campus. You can also cut up boxes from recycling bins or grab a few sheets of paper from the printers to use as bases for collages or paintings.

Lily Charkey '25.5 shared that she loves to host craft nights with her friends and locally source her materials. She often goes to Monroe Street Books right off of Route 7 to collect discounted used books with fun pictures and words to use as collaging materials. Charkey has found books ranging from gardening guides to funky rug patterns to old atlases, all for affordable prices. She purchases additional materials — glue sticks, scissors and thick paper — from One Dollar Market.

"When I'm crafting with my friends I really get a chance to reflect on the day in a way that we don't always do," Charkey said. "When you're crafting, you're not usually on your phone, so you're focused on what you're doing and the people you're with, so it really helps you to live in the moment and talk about whatever's on your mind."

Craft nights can bring you together, whether you're just doing an intimate one with your closest friends or a bigger event with people you may not know very well. Either way, crafting is great for getting closer and connecting with others.

WRMC traditionally hosts a collage night at the beginning of every semester during one of their weekly general board meetings to encourage DJs to get crafty and promote their shows. DJs — who are typically only in the studio once a week to do their hour-long show — may not always feel connected to the larger WRMC community, so having events like these really allows people to grow closer to their fellow DJs.

"I think it's so good for bringing people together," said WRMC President Natalie Penna '24. "Especially on a college campus, because there's not a lot of time to have fun and be creative with other people. Crafting is such a personal activity where you can give an unlimited amount of your own flair to whatever you're doing, so I think it's a good way to get to know other people in that sense."

Isla Mitchell '26 also enjoys attending craft nights with her friends. She doesn't always walk away with a new piece of art after every craft night, however. Instead, she likes to collect materials to save for future projects, so her art pieces can slowly build up over a period of time. Once she's collected enough materials, she'll combine them all into one, cohesive piece of art. For Mitchell, crafting is also a chance for her to get to know her friends in a new way: through their art.

"I think it's really fun to see the different things your friends can come up with because even though you're starting from the same books or the same magazines, you all end up with very different products," Mitchell said.

Craft nights with friends can look like a lot of different things: collaging in a dorm, attending pottery open hours or even just sketching on a piece of paper passed back and forth are all exciting choices. So gather your materials, find your friends and tune out the rest of the world for a bit — you may be surprised at how good you'll feel after.

SKILES ROBERTS-SALVADOR

Middlebury Discount Comedy travels "Off Campus"

By IZZY RONDA
Contributing Writer

For the first time ever, student sketch comedy group Middlebury Discount Comedy (MDC) hosted a show off campus — appropriately titled "Off Campus" — at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater. On the evening of March 7, Middlebury students and town residents alike filed into the theater in anticipation of the comedy to ensue. In snippets of conversation overheard before the start of the show, repeated variations of the phrase "we need some comedy in our lives" reverberated throughout the space. The crowd definitely got what they wished for: MDC showed videos, performed stand-up and staged sketches, all of which evoked roars of laughter from audience members.

Former MDC president and current Town Hall Theater intern Keziah Wilde '24 expressed excitement about having access to stage-tech appliances such as spotlights and musical interludes thanks to the collaboration with the theater, as well as about MDC performing in front of a larger audience than their typical Hepburn Zoo shows.

"I think moving outwards to a bigger audience is a cool step, especially for people in the group who want to be performing for big audiences and who want to be moving into doing comedy in bigger areas if they want to, like a city or having their own shows," she said.

Town Hall Theater Production Stage Manager Mary Longey echoed Wilde's enthusiasm for the partnership.

"I think that anytime there can be a collaboration between the town and the college is a good thing for both communities," Longey said. She emphasized her appreciation for the talent and passion exhibited by both her co-workers at the theater and by the college students, praising the artistic endeavors for bringing joy to both groups of people and to the surrounding community.

Wilde took center stage to open the show, thanking the theater for hosting the club and reiterating her excitement for the opportunity. The show commenced with two video sketches. The first, entitled "We're all the Man," featured a boy and a girl stumbling into a college dorm room in an amazingly awkward satire about college hookup culture. A hilarious but cringe-worthy few minutes later, the video ended with the boy cluelessly strumming away on his guitar, singing a parody of Tom Petty's "Free Fallin.'"

The second video, "X Marks the Spot," depicted a girl excitedly telling her two friends how her name had been written on several of the infamous Proc crush lists (spoiler alert: It was her who signed her own name on each and every one). The video came to a priceless close with the crush list vandalizer slowly ripping apart the stolen lists and shoving the shreds of paper into her mouth. Though the short scene may have been geared towards college students, the other audience members laughed along at the look of shame painted across the culprit's face as she slowly chewed on the remains of the formerly carefully crafted Proc crush lists.

Following the videos, Wilde and Jonah Joseph '24 performed stand-up comedy. Each comic displayed their own individualistic style of stand-up, entertaining their audience with jokes about creepy men commenting on avatar body shapes on Reddit threads (Wilde) and the "nepo babies" up at the college who take baths in Battell after lacrosse practice (Joseph).

To close out the performance, the members of the club came together to perform several live sketches, all of which were creative, energized and, at times, uncomfortably relatable. From a heated disagreement over when the proper time to salt your meal is to "the ultimate will-they-won't-they" elevator ride to a tumultuous, yet touching Zoo animal tour, each sketch elicited laughter from audience members, regardless of length. Both a short parody on the Twilight series in which the supposed character of Edward turns out to be a "pale" and "ghostly" garden gnome and a drawn-out reenactment of a slam-poetry event kept the crowd's attention fixed on the stage.

"The College and Town Hall Theatre relationship is so important to us, and I think for many of the students who come here and find opportunity, and professors who come here to showcase their work," wrote Town Hall Theater Executive Director Lisa Mitchell in an email to The Campus. "It can be good to come down the hill and have this town-gown interaction that might be a little different than it would be at the college."

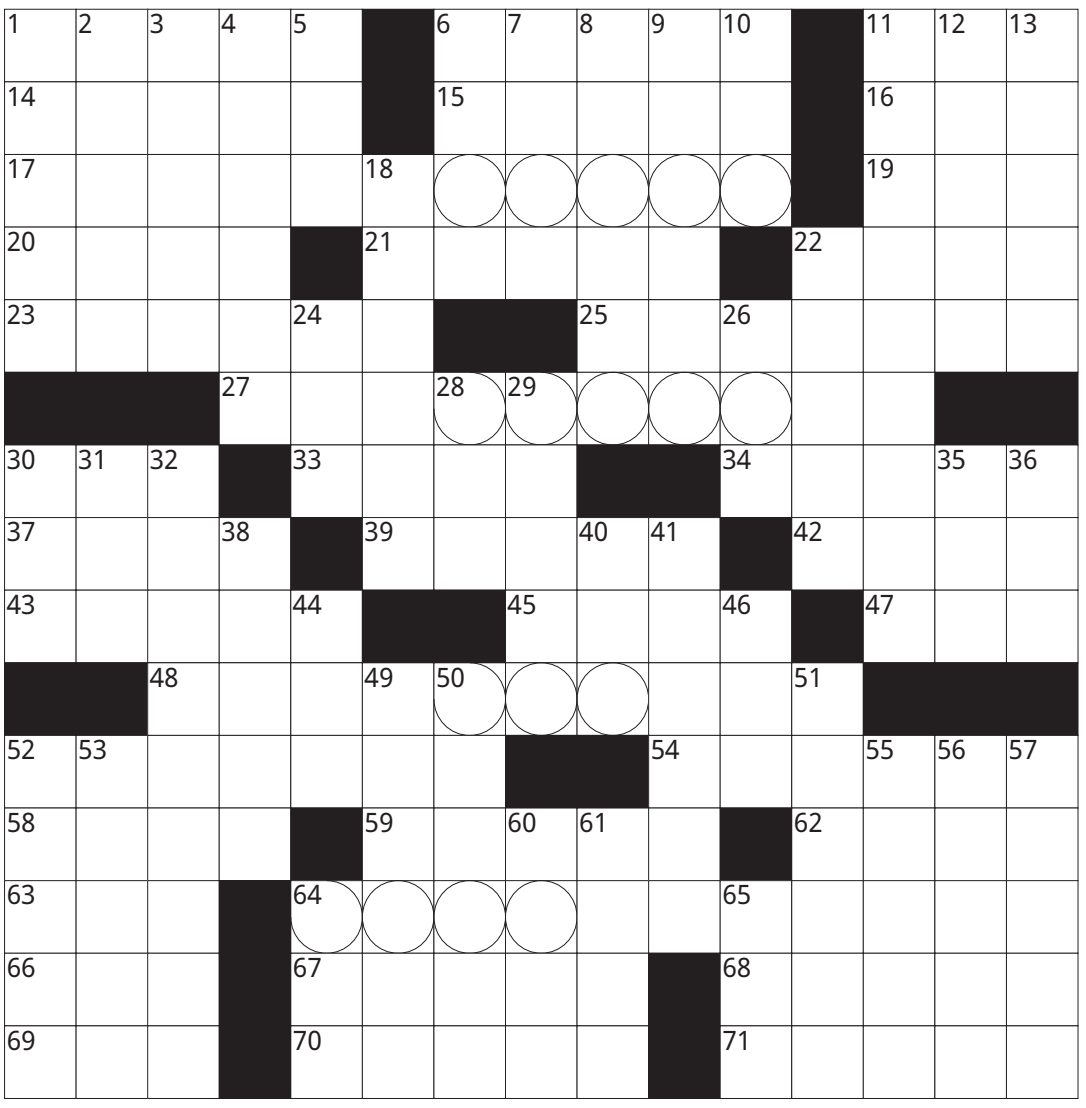
Mitchell expressed her excitement for future collaborations.

"If you need a laugh, look no further: MDC will provide!"

COURTESY PHOTO/ MIDDLEBURY DISCOUNT COMEDY
Middlebury Discount Comedy rehearses for their off campus debut.

Easy as Pie

Avery Goldstein and Ella Charnizon



ACROSS
1 Dalmatian features
6 Henry VIII's house
11 Plant, perhaps
14 Jost of SNL
15 Anguish
16 Dessert with a crust
17 Literary technique followed by Billy Goats, Little Pigs and Bears
19 Body spray brand
20 Dry
21 Turn back to zero
22 Sing like Ella
23 False start?
25 Campus cat
27 Located exactly
30 Pickle container
33 George Orwell's alma mater
34 1988 Olympics host
37 Pet peeve?
39 More cunning
42 Blockbuster with viral popcorn bucket
43 Fermented milk drink
45 Hot spot
47 18 mi. loop that runs through the Knoll
48 Alexa's device
52 Male carriers?
54 Rio Grande city
58 Digging
59 Ran a marathon
62 Word before love and crime
63 Female deer
64 Winter, spring, summer, fall
66 ___ Arbor
67 Coup follower
68 Colossal
69 "Absolutely!"
70 Sauce for canned chipotles
71 How a Rueben is served

DOWN
1 Junkyard metal
2 Rains cats and dogs
3 Skateboarding jump
4 At deuce, say
5 ___-cone
6 London gallery
7 Exasperated exclamations
8 _____ fa-so-la-ti
9 50 to 2:00
10 Whiskey
11 In la-la land
12 "Inside Out" studio
13 Fiercely flings, in modern slang
18 Puts up the money for
22 Go 55 in a 40
24 Catan cube
26 UFO crew
28 D.C. insider
29 Satirical publication with "The"
30 LGA alternative
31 Brewski
32 Ties again
35 Spanish article
36 NASA vehicle
38 "We ___ please"
40 Anticipatory night
41 What hairlines and coastlines may do
44 Aries animal
46 Stanley Cup org.
49 Closed (in on)
50 Acting without thinking
51 Decides to join
52 3/14 to math lovers and a hint to this puzzle's circled letters
53 Two ___ (unfair fight)
55 Like a loud crowd
56 Bright
57 Sunset dirección
60 Sebastian of "The Little Mermaid," for one
61 This, in Santiago
64 Rx watchdog
65 Past

Reel Critic: "The Zone of Interest"

By JACK TORPEY
Arts & Culture Editor

The Hirschfield International Film Series returned to Dana Auditorium on March 7, bringing an audience of Middlebury College students, faculty and community members an exclusive screening of one of 2023's most celebrated films: "The Zone of Interest." Written and directed by British filmmaker Jonathan Glazer, the German-language film observes the daily lives of Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss and his family as they enjoy a serene existence in an idyllic compound located just outside the walls of the Nazi concentration camp.

Sased on the late author Martin Amis' novel of the same name, the historical drama premiered at the Cannes Film Festival last May before receiving a limited theatrical run in the United States in December, which was enough to garner it five nominations and two wins (international feature and sound) at the 2024 Academy Awards.

Now, thanks to the dedicated work of the Hirschfield Programming Committee, this painfully vital film has made its way to Middlebury, and those who were able to attend the screening will not soon forget it. Constructed with clockwork precision from images of refined appeal and sounds of paralyzing horror, "The Zone of Interest" is an arresting audio-visual experience that confronts its audience with the jarring reality that the most barbarous of acts can be carried out by the most civilized of people.

The central conceit of Glazer's film is the constant contrast between what it lets the audience see and hear. Cinematographer Lukasz Zal's camera rarely leaves the bounds of the Höss family's house and garden, and except for two brief yet striking night sequences shot in infrared, it never ventures over the walls to reveal the atrocities occurring on the other side. What Glazer and Zal present instead is a series of delicately composed, mostly static shots of the banal pleasantries of upper-middle-class domestic life.

Rudolf (Christian Friedel) and his wife Hedwig (Sandra Hüller) lie in bed and chat about chocolate and perfume, eat birthday cake with their young children and host a pool party in their yard. Watching these scenes unfold is akin to watching a family drama, if a rather uneventful one. Never before, however, has a family drama been set to a soundtrack of rifle pops and wailing babies. That is the innovation of "The Zone of Interest," and it makes for one of the most devastating sensory experiences ever evoked by a motion picture.

Oscar-winning sound designer Johnnie Burn spent a year building an aural library of the Holocaust to provide Glazer with the sounds that were so critical to the director's vision of a totally auditory immersion into the horrors of Auschwitz. Together, they created a dense soundscape of human suffering and despair that underlies every benign image of the Höss estate, provoking audio-visual dissonance of the most disturbing kind.

The effect, of course, is intended to thrust the audience into the minds of the Hösses, who spend their every day within earshot of industrialized murder but have the satisfaction of never needing to look it in the eye. They manage to deafen themselves to the sounds of death emanating from over the walls of their home. For the audience, however, the ghastly cries of the unseen suffering are never less than shockingly immediate.

COURTESY PHOTO
The Hirschfield International Film Series showed "The Zone of Interest" in Dana Auditorium last week.

The morbidly ingenious interplay between sight and sound in Glazer's film is a bellwether of the overall quality of its craftsmanship. Production designer Chris Oddy's period work captures the ostentatious Nazi aesthetic with stunning detail, an exemplary set being the Höss' elaborate garden lined with a grid of stone slab pathways interlocking at forty-five-degree angles. The score, written by Oscar-nominated composer Mica Levi, opens the film with an eerie overture that is bookended by an even more haunting finale after the final cut to black. Between those two musical showcases is an extremely minimalistic composition that is nonetheless deeply effective, inserting itself at key moments in the drama with alarming, almost alien-sounding tones.

And then there's Glazer's script, completely devoid of melodrama and riddled with cuttingly ironic lines of dialogue that are sure to make viewers squirm. "It gets so cold in winter you wouldn't believe it," Hedwig tells her visiting mother about the family's reason for installing central heating. Glazer puts those words in the audience's ears, but it is the image associated with them — men, women and children, all famished to the bone, their exposed bodies freezing into rigid boards in the bitter Polish winter — that gets seared in the mind.

Lines like that are what make "The Zone of Interest" such a bewildering watch. It is easy to think that unspeakable crimes like those enacted by the Nazis at Auschwitz and the countless other concentration camps across Europe can only be committed by plainly evil people. But Rudolf Höss, a real SS officer who was executed in 1947 for his role in the Holocaust, had none of the trappings of a plainly evil man. He was a caring husband and father of five. He enjoyed taking his family on lakeside picnics, and when his children couldn't sleep at night, he lay in bed with them and read fairy tales aloud until they drifted off. Höss, in almost every sense of the word, was a normal man. But his job was killing Jews, and he devised the methods to do so in the most ruthlessly efficient way possible.

How can we reconcile the dual realities of this man's life? More pressingly, what does the Höss family's experience say about our own capacities for evil? Glazer's excellent film is not one to provide easy answers, but it does offer an urgent warning: Good people, like everyone in Dana Auditorium on the night of March 7 surely thought themselves to be, need to be on guard not just against the physical threats of the world around them, but against the moral ones with the power to corrupt from within.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: "THE LESBIAN HOUSE"

By CATHERINE GOODRICH
Arts & Culture Editor

Shuffling through the Davis Family Library atrium crowded with students on the way to study and tour groups taking in said students on the way to study, a black-and-white photograph caught my eye from a display case. The photo pictured a young Bee Ottinger lying in bed, her hair artfully outlining her chest. I debated telling the father of a prospective student next to me that only at Middlebury can you find a nude of your professor in a school-sanctioned exhibit.

"The Lesbian House (1972-1973)" is Middlebury Special Collection's newest library exhibit featuring a selection of photographs by Middlebury alumna Barbara "Bee" Ottinger '70. Ottinger has enjoyed an exceptional career based in Los Angeles, while her connection to Middlebury remains strong. She has been a visiting professor of film and media studies since the early 2000s, and I had the privilege of taking her recent J-Term course, Video Editing Fundamentals, in which she taught students how to cultivate aesthetic and narrative control through informed editing.

Ottinger has a talent for maximizing the emotional potential of an image through thoughtful composition and an adept understanding of visual storytelling. This talent was wielded in music videos like Martika's "I Feel the Earth Move" and Celine Dion's "I Drove All Night," both of which Ottinger edited. Her creativity especially shines in her California Institute of the Arts master's thesis, "The Lesbian House."

"The Lesbian House" features portraits from the '70s of lesbian couples and friends who had little in common in terms of class, race and region but had found a haven in a commune-esque house on Oxford Street in Los Angeles. In a 2010 interview, Ottinger described the house as being founded on a faith in lesbianism and acceptance; there were no men, no parents and very little privacy. Ten to fifteen lesbian women were living in the house at any given time from 1972 to 1973.

"It was kind of like Peter Pan not growing up," Ottinger said in the same interview about living in the house. "No one was very serious, no one was very career-minded — it was just a time that was a bubble."

The house had a reputation for fun and experimentation while also being a politically vibrant place. In the Davis exhibit, the photo "Beach Lounging" offers a snapshot of this free-spirited, politically-charged ethos: The photo depicts a lesbian woman flexing her bicep, topless, at a public beach. The exhibit also features many pictures of lesbian couples and friends doting on one another. Photos like "Sandy and a Friend," "Advice," "Gloria" and "Kelly feeding her Girlfriend" all express a spirit of circumstantial toughness meeting interpersonal tenderness. Ottinger undoubtedly has an eye for capturing personal intimacies entwined with political mischievousness.

"The Lesbian House perfectly encapsulates the late '60s and '70s," Ottinger told The Campus. "The adventuresome, the nonconformity, the sloughing off of material goods, the classlessness, the feminism, the equality for women all took place in that house."

The title card for "The Lesbian House" features bold lettering in retro shades of orange, yellow and blue with a background of some of the more than 1,000 black and white negatives Ottinger gifted to Special Collections over 10 years ago. This backdrop serves as a reminder of the devout documentation that went into "The Lesbian House" and the power of tactful curation, as there is only so much content that can be placed in the library display cases.

The Davis display is bookended with archival material from Ottinger's time as a student at Middlebury in the late '60s. Ottinger was the president of Mortar Board, where she organized the Women's Liberation Symposium in March 1970 and founded the Middlebury Photography Club. Passing through the Davis atrium by "The Lesbian House," it's hard not to feel pride for the larger Middlebury community and the influential careers alumni have developed.

"I think it's really inspirational for Middlebury students right now to think like 'Okay, the things that I'm doing, the discoveries that I'm making can influence where my life is going to go,'" said Special Collections Outreach Specialist Mikaela Taylor '15.5, referring to this archival material from Ottinger's time at Middlebury. "There's such a beautiful opportunity at this point in students' lives to make discoveries and connections that are going to influence them going forward."

Ottinger's formative academic and extracurricular experiences at Middlebury led her to pursue artistic and personal excitement in California.

"I really never fit into New England, though I love New England and it's a part of me, but I always felt constricted and the West was much less ambitious, less individual. It suited me better, it was calmer," Ottinger said in an interview with The Campus. "I loved Middlebury, but all my friends were white, upper-middle class, you know, and I love them to death but I needed a different environment, and L.A. and that house gave it to me."

COURTESY PHOTO/SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
"The Lesbian House" exhibit in Special Collections features a selection of photographs taken by Middlebury alumna Barbara "Bee" Ottinger '70.

Though rooted in the spirit of West Coast '70s counterculture, "The Lesbian House" is apt to be shown at Middlebury today. With the recent opening of the Prism Center and a tense political moment, the content of the house feels more relevant now than ever.

"The Lesbian House definitely captured the changing role of women," Ottinger said. "There was an idealism to feminism and the social revolution. There was a desire to be classless and inclusive, which I find to be very relevant to what's going on now."

Taylor agreed that the exhibit fits well in the current climate.

"I think that with all the discussion around Roe v. Wade being overturned wand a lot of women's rights being challenged now I think ["The Lesbian House"] resonates a lot with the need to gather and find community so that one can feel comfortable to speak out against injustices," she said.

"The Lesbian House," though first displayed 50 years ago, is a pertinent reminder to Middlebury that a major agent of artistic and political freedom is being in community with one another.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE STARTS THE SEASON STRONG WITH THREE CONSECUTIVE WINS

By GAVIN THOMSEN
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO

Hope Shue '25 has scored 10 goals already for the women's lacrosse team this season.

The two-time reigning champion Middlebury women's lacrosse team began their 2024 campaign this past week, looking to build on an undefeated 2023 season. The week featured away games against Babson College and Amherst College, and a home contest versus Bowdoin College. In that stretch, the Panthers outscored opponents by an impressive combined score of 50–13, winning all three contests comfortably.

On Saturday, March 2, the Panthers opened their season with a bang, defeating the #19 ranked Amherst Mammoths 16–5. Hope Shue '25 paced Middlebury's offensive front, registering four goals and two assists in the game. She was joined by Caroline Adams '26, who had four goals and one assist, Susan Rowley '24, who had two goals and one assist, and Kate Motley '27, who had two goals.

The Panthers prevailed again at Babson the following day, marking Middlebury's 30th straight win in a streak dating back to May of 2022. The Panthers rattled off 10 unanswered goals during the first and second quarters to propel them to an 18–5 victory over the Beavers. Throughout the game, Rowley had five goals and two assists, Shue recorded four goals and one assist, and Maggie Coughlin '24.5 scored three goals.

The following weekend, Middlebury faced Bowdoin College in their home opener on Saturday, March 9 at Peter Kohn Field, with hopes of maintaining the successes of the previous weekend. In a decisive 16–3 triumph over the Polar Bears, regular scorers Shue, Coughlin and Adams tallied five points each. Skylar Lach '26, an emerging feature in this season's offensive group, added three points in Saturday's outing.

While the powerful Middlebury offense often receives the credit for the team's success, Shue described the defense as equally key to the recent wins.

"Amherst, Babson and Bowdoin are young, gritty teams. Our offense showed poise in our ability to change our game plan and execute, but that adaptability would not have been possible without the backing of our incredible defense," Shue said.

Led by Chloe Newman '24, Kylie Wilson '25, Madison Paylor '25, Grace Mumford '25 and Haley Hamilton '26, the Panthers' defense combined for 8, 18 and 14 caused turnovers against Amherst, Babson and Bowdoin, respectively. Shue also noted that the success this past week will be valuable in motivating the Panthers as the season begins to ramp up.

"The week got the entire team really excited about how hard this team works and how much depth we have throughout the roster," she said. "We know what we need to work on in the coming weeks, and we're excited to improve."

Looking forward, Shue stated that while the Panthers' mentality is certainly guided by the end goal of a third-straight national championship, their focus remains steadfastly on the present.

"The national championship isn't something we talk about as a team often because we are so focused on each practice and each week's competition," she added. "Hopefully that mindset is what is going to push us towards another championship this year."

First ranked Middlebury looks to sustain their 31-game win streak throughout their spring break on the road, with upcoming away contests against Bates College, Franklin & Marshall College and The College of New Jersey. They will return to Peter Kohn Field on Saturday, March 30, in a NESCAC matchup against Wesleyan University.

Women's squash Coach Mark Lewis named NESCAC Coach of the Year

By BROOKE FRIBERG
Contributing Writer

COURTESY PHOTO

Mark Lewis won the NESCAC Coach of the Year Award for the third time in his career.

After leading the Middlebury women's squash team to their highest winning season since 2015 and to the NESCAC tournament and Kurtz Cup Semifinals, Head Coach Mark Lewis was voted the NESCAC Coach of the Year by his league peers. Lewis was given the honor on March 5, marking the third time he has won the award after receiving it in 2017 and 2020 as well.

The Panthers' success this season was driven by the program's two guiding principles — passion and curiosity, according to Lewis. He worked hard to instill these values in each player through his hands-on leadership approach.

"As a coach, they have to see me doing stuff for them," Lewis said. "If they can see that, and see me doing that in a way that's responsible and emotionally connected, it's a way for the program to give permission to each person to go, oh yeah, I want to serve this team."

Lewis' impact on his team extends far beyond the squash court. Lindsey Burnham '26 commended his unwavering support, and attributed the team's exemplary performance to the trust that they share with their coach.

"Having someone who I know is in my corner is really nice, and I think the whole team feels that way," Burnham said. "They can go to [Lewis] for anything, and that built-in trust has allowed us to really grow as a team, and our results really show that in the grouping and the rankings every year."

This year marks Lewis' ninth year at Middlebury College, where he not only serves as the head coach of the men's and women's squash teams, but also as the director of intramural sports. During his tenure at Middlebury, Lewis has led the women's team to an 86–66 record, and looks to be on track to reach 100 wins next year. He has also led the men's team to an 85–71 record over the same time period.

Lewis described the award as a nice surprise and affirmation to receive from his NESCAC colleagues. "It's a humble reminder that you're doing okay here, keep going," he added.

Women's Track and Field 4x400 relay competes at NCAA Championships

By CHARLES CROUNSE
Senior Sports Editor

The 4x400 relay of the women's track and field team, composed of Michelle Louie '24, Anna Krouse '25.5, Lily Bulczynski '26 and Mary Elliot '26, competed in the NCAA Championships this past weekend in Virginia Beach, Va. The team entered the race as the #12 seed and finished in the same spot in the preliminary round on Friday, missing out on a trip to the finals.

Although the quartet aspired to compete in Saturday's final, they returned to Middlebury with their heads held high. Their run marked the 19th time the women's track and field team has appeared at the national meet coming off of an impressive victory at the Tufts National Qualifying Meet, where the relay narrowly triumphed over a strong Johns Hopkins University team to make the championship.

"While the race did not go as well as we had hoped, I think we exceeded all of our expectations just by making it to the national championship and getting to represent Middlebury," Elliot wrote in an email to The Campus. "The experience of getting to compete at such a high level was incredible, especially given that we didn't think we were going to be able to go at all."

The trip to Virginia was made all the more exciting after the Panthers were initially told they missed out on the meet, ranking as the 13th fastest team in the nation when the top 12 made the championship. However, following the withdrawal of Ohio Northern University's team, Middlebury was awarded the final spot in a competitive field.

Matched against three teams with faster qualifying teams in the second heat, the Panthers came out swinging. Louie kicked hard in the final straightaway to hand off the baton level with Washington University, clocking in at 58.34. Elliot picked up where her teammate left off as she sprinted out to an early lead in the second leg, but her competitors measured their effort and overcame her in the final turn. Bulczynski rallied to regain ground in the third leg, finishing her effort in under a minute. Krouse anchored the team and finished fast at 58.27, but was unable to close the gap that had opened to the team's rivals.

With the curtains closing on a successful indoor track season, the four members of the relay now turn their attention to the outdoor season, which begins next week as the team heads to San Diego for their annual spring break training trip. Elliot hopes that the 4x400 will remain intact when competition resumes.

"Being a part of such a talented relay was such a gift," she added. "This spring, we definitely plan to run some more races together, and although nothing is hammered down, we are so excited and the women's 4x4 will definitely continue to be a force going into the outdoor season."

Women's hockey punches ticket to NCAA semifinals

By JONATHAN BUCHHOLZ
Contributing Writer

The Middlebury women's ice hockey team is moving on to the NCAA semifinals. In the first round of the NCAA tournament, the Panthers beat Western New England University 8–0, and in the quarterfinals, the team topped Plattsburgh State 2–0.

Middlebury was first on the scoreboard in the victory over Western New England when Avery McInerny '26 put a puck past the goalie at the end of the first period. Just over a minute later, Delanie Goniwiecha '23.5 added to the tally. Throughout the postseason, the Panthers have developed a reputation for scoring in rapid succession, building off of each other's momentum to keep getting the puck in the net.

McInerny scored again in the second period to extend the lead. Sabrina Kim '25, Kate Flynn '27 and Jordan Hower '24.5 each added goals of their own to bring the score up to 6–0. Despite the game already being securely out of reach for the Golden Bears, the Panthers remained ruthless to the final buzzer.

In the third period, Audrey Lazar '23.5 scored her first goal of the season, and Raia Schluter '25 finished Middlebury's scoring spree to end the game with a difference of 8–0. Middlebury's defense remained sturdy throughout the game, highlighted by another clean sheet by Sophia Will '26, her third of the postseason.

After their first-round win, the Panthers met Plattsburgh in the quarterfinals, to whom they lost 2–1 earlier this season in January. Despite failing to record a win over the Cardinals since the 2019-2020 season, team captain Cat Appleyard '24.5 described the Middlebury squad entering the game with confidence.

"We've been really confident. We've been able to score and going into the games this weekend, people were riding our NESCAC win as well as our win on Wednesday and felt really confident in themselves and their teammates and our goalie across the board," Appleyard said. "For some reason, I wasn't that nervous going to the week and I was just confident in everybody."

Facing Plattsburgh in the NCAA quarterfinals gave Middlebury a sense of deja vu after the Cardinals knocked them out in the same round of the tournament last year in a 4–2 defeat. This year, the Panthers were searching for revenge.

As they have done often this postseason, the Panthers were first to score. Lazar shot the puck into the net halfway through the first period for her second goal in as many games. Later in the period, Plattsburgh almost answered with a conversion of their own, but Will made a fantastic save to maintain the shutout.

In the second period, Flynn converted a pass from Callia Ferraris '27 to make the score 2–0 before the rest of the game went scoreless. In a desperate attempt to make up their two-point deficit, the Cardinals pulled their goalie off the ice to add an additional skater, but Will's stalwart defense kept the Cardinals at bay. This was her eighth shutout of the season, tying her for second in the Middlebury single-season record book.

This Friday, the Middlebury women's hockey team hopes to continue their momentum as they will face Elmira College in the final four, hosted by the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, with the chance to play in the NCAA DIII Championship game on the line.

"We're just going to carry this wave of confidence that we've had from [the quarterfinal] and from the past couple of games and we're gonna work really, really hard this week," Appleyard said. "We're going out to Wisconsin early this week, so being able to get out there and take a plane and just feeling the excitement of being able to go to the final four is huge."

COURTESY PHOTO
The women's hockey team is looking to repeat as national champions after winning the title two years ago.

Amateur vs. Athlete: Taking on women's track & field in transition season

By LEXI LINAFELTER
Sports Editor

Welcome to Amateur vs. Athlete: a column where we, lowly sports writers of The Campus and fans of our beloved Middlebury Panthers sports teams, delve into the mind of an in-season varsity athlete by challenging them to a one-on-one competition in their craft.

For the inaugural edition of A vs. A, I took on track and field athletes Maggie Allen '24 and Ashley Raynor '24.

The first event I tackled was the 800m on the indoor track. To preface, I consider myself an average runner. I can enjoy a pleasant jog when the Vermont sun comes out. I (usually) do not shy away from cardio, and I compete in a high-intensity varsity sport, though admittedly one that does not require running further than 30 feet. Despite rumors that the 800m is among the most grueling races, I cannot emphasize my lack of preparedness at the start of this race enough for the sensation that faced my quads by the end. In retrospect, I came out too hard and too fast trying to keep up.

Raynor dusted me head-to-head, faster than I would care to admit. I was able to finish this round of 1v1 without getting lapped, though while I flopped on the turf, Raynor was hardly sweating. After catching my breath and digesting my brutal defeat, I sought the scoop about what has kept her on the track:

Lexi Linafelter: How did you get into track?

Ashley Raynor: My mother is a marathon runner and has been running for pretty much her whole life, so it was something I always wanted to try but I started in middle school. I actually really wanted to play lacrosse, but there weren't any spots on any middle school teams so I ran track and I ended up loving it.
LL: What do you like about the sport?

AR: It is so interesting because it's such an individual sport, I mean, you're obviously racing on your own but it still feels like you have a huge team aspect. There are 100 people on my team so it's a great mix of individual and team aspects, especially for big championship meets.

LL: What is the hardest part about competing?

AR: It's way too easy to get caught up in the little things. Your time can come down to .1 or .05 seconds and it's so easy to get caught up in the tiniest details. That's why it's so important, and I'm really lucky, to have a team environment where I'm able to lean on the support of my teammates through a really hard workout, or if I am just not feeling it that day.

LL: What is the most fun part of Middlebury Track and Field?

AR: When we're all on the track together — Tuesdays are the best and worst because it's our really hard workout day across all event groups and the best part is getting on the track with ~50 people and everyone is doing a different, really hard workout and cheering each other on.

LL: Can you explain this time of year to me?

AR: Indoor season was great, New England championships were pretty good a couple of weeks ago and the women's 4x4 team just got back from NCAAs, so it was super cool to send a group of four women down to Virginia Beach and see them do so well. Right now is a really big training block for most of the team, so everybody minus those four is training pretty hard during these couple weeks. So higher mileage, sometimes several days a week where you're running more than once a day, and still having Monday-Saturday training makes this a pretty heavy training period.

LL: It's your senior spring — what are you thinking about entering your last season?

AR: Our women's team is looking to win our third NESCAC title — it is so crazy we [hadn't] won in 20 years and in the past two years we've won so we're totally looking for a three-peat. Our San Diego [training trip] will be awesome and I'm really excited to spend time with the team there. Obviously, it is a big training opportunity and I am looking forward to running in the sun, but this is also where so much of our bonding happens as a team. Between the big team events, running, and some other fun traditions we have for the trip, it's always a really fun time and I'm looking forward to spending a ton of time together.

Next, I challenged Maggie Allen to a triple jump and 60m hurdles. I was excited for this one because I do consider myself an above-average jumper. As a middle hitter on the varsity women's volleyball team, I would conservatively guess that I have jumped to full extension 50 times a day, six days a week, six months of the year, for nine years. You do the math!

Naively, I hoped that this would give me an advantage in the jump events. I was wrong. Allen performed with ease and rhythm, and after one attempt, I was amazed by the coordination required to receive a scorable result in the event. It was quite fun and I happily returned to battle for a second attempt. I made the pit once, barely. Even varsity triple jumpers scratch, so I'll leave the amount of fouled efforts I put forth to your imagination.

In hindsight, I should have anticipated that the 60m hurdles would be an extreme challenge. Even without meet-day intensity, Allen leaped over all five hurdles and watched from the end while I tripped, knocked each hurdle over, and paused several times to collect myself. It was obvious in both events that properly timing the sequence of maneuvers required to get off the ground is one challenge; it is quite another to do it thousands of times, under pressure, braving the elements of an outdoor track meet, against similarly-talented jumpers. Brushing off the sand, I caught up with Allen about how she does it:

LL: First, what events do you compete in?

Maggie Allen: Indoor, I do 60m hurdles, triple jump and the occasional long jump. Outdoor, I do 100m hurdles, triple jump and long jump, occasionally.

LL: What do you like about the sport of track and field?

MA: I just think the energy at a track meet is totally unmatched. From an outside perspective it might seem like track is a really individual event but in fact, it's the closest I've ever felt to a team that I've been on. I think it's because you're so exposed, you're out there on the track alone but you know your entire team is behind you supporting you.

LL: Has your favorite thing about track changed at the collegiate level?

MA: Competing at the collegiate level has allowed me to embrace what it's like to be a part of a really powerful female environment. I think that is something really special that I had in high school but I know many aren't so lucky, and coming into college and being able to be a part of a group of ~60 extremely strong women who have totally different perspectives and come from different backgrounds has been so cool.

LL: What is the hardest part about the sport?

MA: I think the hardest part is that the track is 90% mental. Your body is capable of doing so much and the hard part is getting past the mental barriers. Honestly, that is a big reason why our team is so close; we've bonded in such mental struggle together. But, obviously, that is so applicable to life outside of track and I've learned so many lessons that benefit me in so many ways.

LL: I'd love to come back to the mental element, but first, can you explain this time of year to me?

MA: I think people assume it's a smooth transition between two of the same types of seasons, but really the transition from indoor to outdoor track is a huge mental shift. For example, the track gets bigger; the elements are now a part of your race; your event distance often changes, like for me; indoors I run 60m hurdles and outdoors I run 100m hurdles. That means the way that you approach racing and training changes.

LL: How are you preparing mentally for the start of a new season?

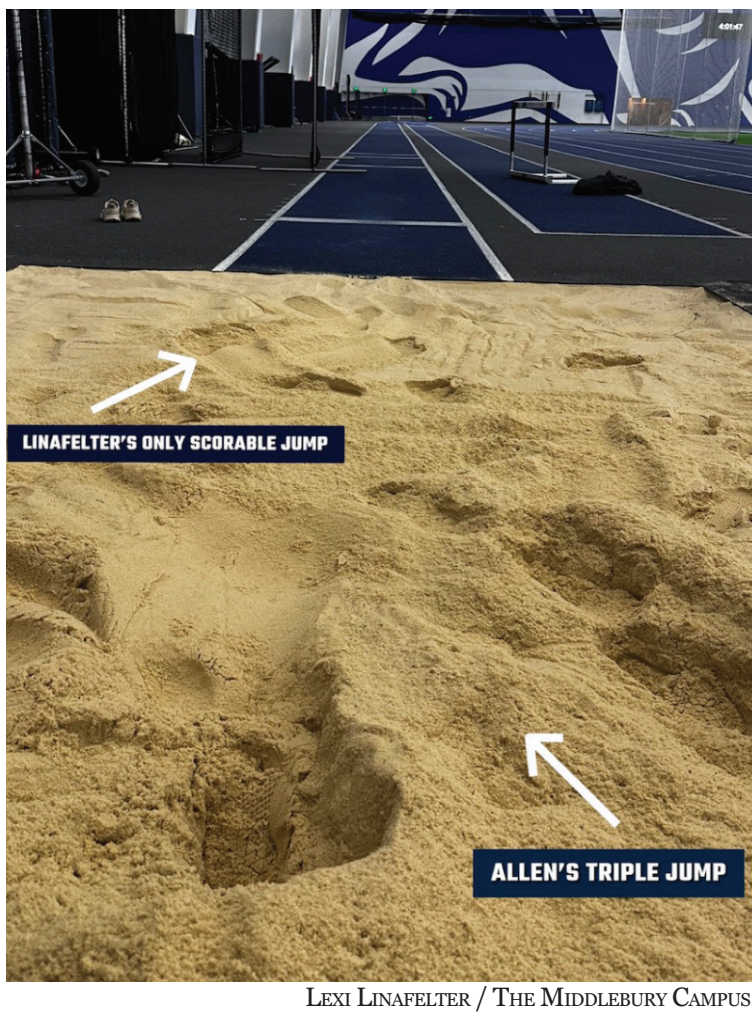
MA: Our team is so good at setting goals. We set team goals and individual goals and staying in the present moment will be critical to being successful and prepared. Annabel Cloney ['25] always says it best, that "iron sharpens iron" and our word of the season is grit–it's gonna be tough but focusing on being affirming to our teammates and knowing the support that's behind you is important in good and bad races.

LL: It's your senior spring — what are your key goals?

MA: Of course, the goal for the team is a three-peat in the NESCAC. It's going to be super challenging, the NESCAC has gotten a lot stronger over the years which pushes us but I think we can do it. On a personal level, I think it's just going to be taking it all in. Being in season for most of the year means I have to remind myself that I don't have much time left and I really just want to enjoy every second of these next eight weeks.

Maybe it was my lack of any technical training whatsoever, but my ability to combine the physical requirements of the events with the concentration they demand was thoroughly outclassed by my varsity opponents.. The respect I have for track athletes (while already exceedingly high) soared from this exercise, which I will certainly be reminded of as I nurse the bruises on my shins from my failures.

Editor's Note: These interviews have been lightly edited for brevity and clarity.+



LEXI LINAFELTER / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
The Campus' Sports Editor tested her skills against Maggie Allen '24.